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The works of John Angell James

THE WORKS

OF

JOHN ANGELL JAMES,

ONEWHILE MINISTER OF THE CHURCH ASSEMBLING IN CARRS LANE BIRMINGHAM.

EDITED BY HIS SON.

VOL. III.

SERMONS.

LONDON: HAMILTON, ADAMS, & CO.
BIRMINGHAM: HUDSON & SON.

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CONTENTS.

PAGE

The Christian Citizen: Funeral Sermon for James James, Esq., 1852 7

The Dying Minister's Reflections and Anticipations: Funeral Sermon for the Rev. Richard Keynes, 1853... ... 57

The Consolation and Duty of Churches under the loss of Eminent Ministers: Funeral Sermon for the Rev. William Jay, 1854 97

The Charge to the Rev. R. W. Dale, M.A., at his Ordination to the Co-pastorate with the Author, 1854 155

Sermon on the Jubilee of the Author, as Minister of Carr's Lane Chapel, 1855 187

The Antidote of Death: Funeral Sermon for Mrs. Redford, 1855 219

Ministerial Fidelity applauded and rewarded: Funeral Sermon for the Rev. Thomas Swan, 1857 257

Christian Philanthropy: Funeral Sermon for Joseph Sturge, Esq., 1859 297

Address at the Funeral of the Rev. Dr. McAll, 1838 ... 339

Address at the Funeral of the Rev. John Jerard, 1852 ... 357

Pastoral Address, including Funeral Sermon for Mrs. T. S. James, 1847 367

The Rivulet Controversy: a Tract for the Times, on speaking the truth in love. Sermon prepared for delivery at the meeting of the Congregational Union which would in course have been held at Cheltenham in the autumn of 1856, but was not convened 403

THE CHRISTIAN CITIZEN IN LIFE AND IN DEATH.

A FUNERAL DISCOURSE

ON THE

DEATH OF JAMES JAMES, ESQ.,

DELIVERED MARCH, 1852.

It is no disparagement to the Author to say that he owed much of his success and comfort in his church and congregation to the counsel and assistance of his younger brother, whose memory he has embalmed in the following discourse. For Mr James James's ability and aptitude in business were such as, with due training, would have fitted him to serve the public in posts far higher than those which fell to his lot. And it was most delightful to see the mutual affection of the brothers, and their reciprocal pride in each other.

During the thirty-seven years they were spared to each other in Birmingham, Mr James James, notwithstanding several changes of residence, always lived in his brother's immediate neighbourhood, except for one twelvemonth, which was in consequence a time of discomfort to both. The Author attended his brother through his last illness with the devotion and tenderness of a woman, and never regained his own spirits after laying him in the grave.

The Author prefixed to the sermon the following preface:

"In discharging the mournful, unusual, and delicate task of preaching a funeral discourse on the death of a beloved brother, I was anxious to say neither all that affection might prompt, nor less than justice demanded.

"It will perhaps be thought that the earlier parts of the sermon partake too little of the solemn and the pathetic to suit the occasion. In the selection of a subject, I was guided by three considerations; a wish to avoid whatever might prove too severe a trial of my own feelings; a desire to adapt the discourse to the character and public career of my lamented brother; and an anxiety to hold up a great public principle to guide the conduct of the living."

Acts of the Apostles xiii, 36.

For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption.

Christianity is the hope, comfort, and glory of our world: the foundation of Christianity is the Messiahship of Christ: the evidence of the Messiahship of Christ consists, among other proofs, of the miracles which he wrought, his resurrection from the grave, and the accomplishment, in his person and work, of the predictions of the Jewish prophets. "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." It is to prove this great fact, that the apostle Paul, according to his custom when reasoning with his countrymen, appeals, in the case before us, to their own Scriptures in support of the claims of Jesus of Nazareth. The sixteenth Psalm has ever, by Christian expositors, been considered an undoubted and very striking prediction of our Divine Lord. The apostle shows in this chapter that it could not apply to David, as some of the Jews supposed, inasmuch as it declares that the subject of it, to whomsoever it referred, was not to suffer the usual consequences of death in the corruption of the body. This was true of Christ, but not of David. Though our

Lord was killed, taken down from the cross, and laid in the sepulchre, yet God raised him from the dead, before any process of decomposition had commenced. Whereas, "David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption."

Having thus briefly explained the connection and design of the text, I go on to consider the apostles' testimony to the character and conduct of David. The history of this illustrious man is at once the glory and the shame of our common nature. His virtues and his vices stand in awful contrast. The one however were permanent, the other, occasional: the one, the sound and healthful body, the other, hideous and diseased excrescences, which, when exscinded by the mercy of God and the deepest repentance and reformation, left the frame, though bearing the scars, alive and robust. Let us follow his piety, which is recorded as a model for imitation; and avoid his sins, which with a fidelity never to be sufficiently admired, are left like beacons for our warning. Let David's bitter tears and pungent remorse be considered not only a proof of his penitence, but a solemn caution to us against pride, sensuality and indolence. Infidels and men of profane minds, to fortify their scepticism or to justify their impiety, have pointed in derision to this melancholy proof of human frailty. There would be some reason, (though but little virtue,) in their conduct, if David had continued his career of iniquity instead of abandoning it; or if he had abandoned it without penitence and remorse; or even if it had been recorded without any mark of reprobation on the part of the historian. But when the reverse of all this is true, and a prophet was sent to bring him to a

due sense of his crimes, nothing can be gathered from the relation, in the way of just candid reflection, but a sad proof of the weakness of human nature in its most exalted condition, and the necessity of perpetual vigilance, caution, and prayer against temptation. And it may be safely affirmed that few things have more effectually taught these lessons than the humiliating example to which we now refer; while nothing has more clearly explained the nature, more imperatively enforced the necessity, or more powerfully fostered the exercise, of true repentance, than the record of David's feelings in the fifty-first Psalm. So that while only one in a thousand has been encouraged by his misconduct to commit sin, tens of thousands have been warned against it; and multitudes who have fallen into the snare of temptation have been encouraged to repentance and saved from despair.

The text refers to David's public character. In almost every view we can take of this, he served his generation; that is, he promoted the interests of his country and his age. This he did chiefly as a monarch. Under his just, wise, and powerful administration, the kingdom of Israel was raised to its highest pitch of power, prosperity and renown. His prowess as a warrior was as great in the camp as his equity and wisdom were in the court. His wars were all successful, his victories illustrious; and as their result, the territories of his kingdom were pushed to a wider boundary than they ever reached before or afterwards. It is true, intestine commotion at one time disturbed the tranquillity of his reign, and that from a quarter whence it could be least expected: but it was suppressed, and he left his kingdom and immense wealth, the fruit of his conquests, to

Solomon his son. The reign of David was the zenith of Israel's prosperity, and specially intended to foreshadow the victories, glory, and power of Him who was both his descendant and his Lord, and of whom, as king and prophet, he was an illustrious type.

But it was as a pious king, a monarch ruling in righteousness, that he served his generation. He ardently loved, and zealously sustained, and provided for the worship of God. He set the example of piety to his subjects and promoted the practice of true religion throughout his dominions. As a poet, he composed for his own private exercises and for public worship, those Psalms, which are lyric odes of the highest order, and which have ever since, not only fed the fire of devotion upon the altar of the believer's heart, but have formed part of the "Prayer Book" of all Christians and christian communities, and of the Liturgy of the Universal Church. During his reign religion flourished more than at any other period of Jewish history. It was the golden age of Judaism. David's conduct in this respect was regulated by God's will, as revealed to him by the communications he received from him. The statutes of Jehovah were his study and delight. He never for a moment swerved to idolatry, but shunned and abhorred it with a perfect detestation. On these accounts, rather than in reference to his private character, he was called "The man after God's own heart."

But David "fell asleep, was laid with his fathers, and saw corruption." Thus ends the earthly and temporary history of man, not excepting the greatest, the wisest, the holiest, and the most useful, of the human race.

Death, like its divine Lord, is no respecter of persons. This unwelcome visitor enters with as little ceremony the palace as the cottage, and with as much ease consigns to corruption, earth, and worms, the monarch as the peasant. The universal as well as the irresistible conqueror, he is neither to be bribed by wealth, nor awed by rank, nor subdued by power. The greatest is not above his reach, nor the meanest beneath his notice. It is appointed to men once to die, and after death, is that which invests it with its greatest terror, the judgment.

I now deduce from this passage, as the subject of discourse, the following remarks:

I. It becomes everyone according to his situation, opportunities, and means, to serve his generation, as regards the place of his abode, his country, and the world.

Of all the things which have a tendency, directly and indirectly, to promote the social interests of humanity, whether viewed on the scale of a town, a kingdom, or of mankind at large, the first and most powerful is religion, true Scriptural religion. We know by what authority it is said, "Righteousness exalteth a nation; but sin is the destruction of any people," and the page of history corroborates the testimony of Scripture. If we look over the present nations of the earth, or study the chronicles of past times, we shall find that piety is the purest and most effective patriotism. Men have talked and written about the natural tendency of nations and empires to sink into decay; just as in the human frame the strength wears out, and old age and declension succeed to youth and manhood, by a law of nature. The analogy is false. Piety and virtue would preserve any

kingdom in the vigour of perpetual youth. It is sin that is the principle and cause of the destruction of nations, and upon the ruins of all the great empires of antiquity, and the monuments of all the kingdoms and states that have passed away, must be written the inscription, DEAD THROUGH TRESPASSES AND SINS. The most religious and moral nations must not only be the happiest but the strongest. Virtue is power, as well as knowledge.

But what do I mean by the religion of a nation? Not its churches merely, whether established or unestablished: not its ministers, whether called pastors or priests; nor its creeds and its formularies; nor its ecclesiastical foundations and endowments. Instances may be cited which prove that kingdoms may be crowded with places of worship, swarm with ecclesiastics, and have the calendar almost equally divided between days of devotion and days of business, and yet be demoralised, degraded, enslaved, and wretched. The substitution of the apparatus of superstition for the doctrines and the precepts, the spirit and the practice, of true religion, which has brought such discredit on the latter, has given rise to infidelity and blighted the interests of humanity. What I mean by religion is the knowledge and belief of the doctrines of the Bible; the practice of its precepts and the exhibition of its virtues. I mean the religion of repentance towards God; faith in our Lord Jesus Christ; supreme love to God, manifested by obedience to his commands; and love to man, exhibiting itself in a delight and study to do him good; and the manifestation of that grace which teacheth us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present evil world." This

religion diffused among the people, permeating the mass, and generally prevalent, this is the first and main ingredient of national prosperity and happiness.

Good government, just laws impartially administered, civil and religious liberty, free municipal institutions, and a humane but wise and judicious system for promoting the comfort of the people generally, and of the poor in particular, all enter vitally into the well-being of a nation. What people can be happy, or ought to be contented, without these? Literature polishes and gratifies the taste; science ennobles as well as delights the intellect; the arts multiply our comforts; commerce gives us wealth, wealth power, power protection, protection confidence, confidence repose. The elements of national greatness and happiness then are many. And it is clear that he serves his generation best who promotes them all; who beginning with the interests of true piety, then with an enlightened and comprehensive survey, fosters and increases the other means of social prosperity.

If the religious people of our age might be charged with narrow exclusiveness, for considering religion the only means of serving their generation (though I do not allow the truth of the accusation), how many are there of an opposite character, who are ready to give their services to the age in any and in every way, but by the diffusion of true religion. It is oftentimes painful to a Christian mind, to see how much of generous public spirit, of impulsive philanthropy, of munificent liberality, is expended upon promoting the welfare of the public, while no sympathy is felt, no zeal manifested for their immortal welfare; as if man had no individual and eternal importance; as if the community were every

thing, and man nothing; and as if society could be well governed without God; its disorders rectified without religion; and its present happiness best promoted without any regard to eternity. This arises in some cases from disbelief, but in more from an ignorance of the nature of revealed truth, as if the Bible had no relation but to another world. "It is the glory of Christianity that it comprehends within itself the seeds of endless improvement; maintains an incessant struggle with whatever is barbarous, selfish, or inhuman; by unveiling futurity, clothes morality with the sanction of a divine law, and harmonises utility and virtue in every combination of events and in every stage of existence. It is this religion, which rising upon us, as a finer sun, has quickened moral vegetation, and replenished Europe with talents, virtues, and exploits, that have rendered it, in spite of physical disadvantages, a paradise, the delight and wonder of the world." It is doing injustice to the character and design of religion to represent it as a mere matter of devotion, intended exclusively to regulate man's intercourse with God and prepare him to bear his part in the community of heaven. That this is its first, its highest, and its ultimate design, is admitted: but it is not its only purpose. Fixed in the firmament of Scripture, like the sun in the heavens, it not only diffuses its glory over the higher regions in which it is placed, but pours down light and warmth, fertility and gladness, upon the earth. Wisdom does not confine her lessons to the sanctuary of God, nor shed her benefits upon his worshippers merely when they go up to his courts, but "crieth without; she uttereth her voice in the streets. She crieth in the chief place of concourse, in the opening of the gates." Is there a social relation, the duties of

which it does not enforce? Is there an interest of social life it does not cherish and protect? Is there a social office the authority of which it does not uphold? Is there a social evil to which it does not place itself in direct antagonism? While it guards the prerogative of the monarch, it defends the liberty of the subject, and is equally the enemy of anarchy and tyranny. Like its Divine Author, though clouds and darkness of inscrutable mystery may be round about it, righteousness, justice, and mercy, are the pillars of its throne.

It is impossible not to perceive, that is if we give ourselves the trouble to inquire into the matter, the intimate connexion between true religion and the well-being of a nation. Let the Bible be acknowledged as the supreme rule for monarchs, senates, and people: let it direct the course, and impregnate with its spirit the stream, of legislation: let it regulate the intercourse and the relations of social life: let its purifying and benign, yet all potent, authority reign in the country and the colonies; in the ship, the port, and the receipt of custom; in the cottage and in the mansion; in the shop, the manufactory, and in the exchange; in the halls of science and the schools of learning: let but this blessed bond of justice and love hold fast the persons, the classes, and the interests which form a nation: and that nation's prosperity will rest on the surest ground, and rise to the highest pitch which is suitable to this state of sinful mortality and necessary trial; "the mountains will bring peace to the people, and the little hills by righteousness."

Nor is it at all difficult to point out those principles in the nature of religion which will conduce to this blessed result. It enjoins and impresses an ever abiding

sense of the presence of God, the holy, righteous and all-powerful governor of the universe, the hater of all sin, and the lover of all righteousness. It not only teaches us to control all the irregular passions which are inimical to the well-being of others, and to cultivate all the affections which promote it, but implants a disposition to make their happiness an element of our own. It keeps in man's recollection the fact of his accountability to God, and sets before him the approaching hour of scrutiny and award. It supplies all the necessary motives for a life of purity, justice, and benevolence, and a character universally excellent and amiable; the most active charity and the tenderest sympathy. It holds out the offer of the Divine power, to encourage us in our struggles after holiness. While by the renovation of the heart, thus planting itself at the very seat of action, it secures the command of the central power, from whence it works outwardly into the life and character.

Nor is it to its own nature merely, that we are to ascribe its power to benefit and bless mankind, but also to the blessing of an overruling Providence. Nations, as such, can have no participation in those rewards which await the pious individual in another state, and whatever tokens of Divine favour are granted to them, must if given at all, be confined to the present world. It would be easy even in the history of our quarter of the globe in modern times, to point out striking instances of the discrimination of God "between the righteous and the wicked, between those who serve him and those who serve him not." What nations are they, which during the last half-century, have been by convulsion, revolution, bloodshed and misery, most pierced by the arrows, or wounded by the sword, of retributive justice? We

have only to behold the track of God's Providence, and to follow the foot-prints of avenging justice across the plains of Europe, to see the truth of the declaration we have already quoted, that "righteousness exalteth a nation, while sin is the destruction of any people."

And if we may particularise by referring to one nation, the leader of all others in infidelity and impiety, who that considers the moral condition of our neighbour-kingdom, can wonder at the scenes of revolution, blood, and misery through which it has passed, during the last half-century of its existence. "That nation, grown old in superstition and oppression, drunken with the blood of the saints, mantled in hypocrisy and teeming with licentiousness, had received the atheistic poison within her veins. She stood gaudy and gorgeous to the eye without, while all within was rottenness; and soon was her shame laid bare. She became first the champion, and then the victim of impiety, beyond every former example. In her seat of supreme power, Christianity was formally abjured; death proclaimed an eternal sleep; and it was declared that man, become free, wants no divinity but himself. The freedom consisted in chains and a reign of terror unknown since the days of Attila; and the divinity substituted in the place of the God of love, was a Moloch, whose altars resounded with groans and reeked with blood throughout the length and breadth of the land."* And "the imperishable memorial of those events may teach, (and should teach), the last generation of mankind to consider religion as the pillar of society, the safeguard of nations, the parent of social order, which alone has power to curb the fury

* Dr. Pye Smith's admirable Sermon, entitled "The Necessity of Religion to the Well-being of a Nation."

of the passions, and secure to every one his rights, to the laborious, the reward of his industry; to the rich, the enjoyment of their wealth; to nobles, the preservation of their honours; and to princes, the stability of their thrones."*

If this be true, and who will have the hardihood to deny it, except those who would confound the vices of professing Christians and the virtues enjoined by Christianity herself, and make her answerable for all that her abused name has been employed to sanction, however abhorrent to her nature, and contrary to her commands, then let the attention of all, and especially of public men, be directed to religion as the great conservator and promoter of national prosperity. This is incumbent at all times, but especially in those now passing over us, when infidelity is again coming forth, sometimes under the guise of the philosopher's cloak, and at others with more honesty and less danger to the interest of the community, in its own undisguised and hideous deformity. We hear much about the increased boldness, audacity, and triumphs of Popery; there is cause for it; and it becomes all sound Protestants to unite for the defence of their common faith, against a foe which history proclaims to be the enemy of pure Christianity, civil liberty, social happiness, and national freedom. But this is not the only, nor the worst foe, the community of this country has to fear. Infidelity, begotten of superstition and unsanctified reason, is menacing us from every quarter; and from this we have far more to dread than from Popery. It is the cold contempt or neglect of all religion, it is the attempt to substitute for it liberty, legislation, and general education; political

* Robert Hall's Sermon on Infidelity.

economy, literature, and science; arts and commerce; it is this, I say, we have most to fear. Important as all these things are to our national welfare; greatly as they are to be valued; and necessary as it is to promote them by all lawful means, they will not of themselves secure either our prosperity or stability: without true religion they will but prepare us for destruction, and serve only as the garland upon the neck of the victim, to decorate the sacrifice on the way to the altar.

It may be safely affirmed therefore that while he who exerts himself for the promotion of liberty, science, literature, the arts, and commerce, does much to serve his generation; he who to these things adds zeal for the cause of religion, does more. Physicians, we appeal to you, would not religion do more to ward off disease than your skill and medicine to cure it? Magistrates, we appeal to you, would not religion do more to prevent crime than your laws and penalties to restrain it? Guardians of the poor, we appeal to you, would not religion do more to arrest poverty than your asylums to shelter and relieve it? Men of science, we appeal to you, would not religion do more to rectify the disorders of society, to dry up the tears of humanity, and hush the groans of creation, than even your glorious discoveries, to promote the happiness of mankind? Senators, we appeal to you, would not religion, were it universally felt in its own power, and exhibited in all its symmetry of just proportion between love to God and love to man, do more to deepen the foundations and strengthen the fabric of society than those legislative economic provisions for the well-being of the community, which cost you so much time and labour to enact and to enforce?

What we want, then, in all our public men, is not a

neglect of any one single element of national prosperity; no indifference to municipal interests, to liberty, to science, to commerce; no, but a clear understanding of the power of religion in advancing the well-being of the community, and a practical acknowledgment of the paramount claims of religion as a matter of personal concern and public interest. We, of course, desire no state provision, no compulsory support, no legal enactment, deeming as we do all these to be unscriptural and even impolitic; but we do anxiously desire that all our public officers should be pious men, exhibiting by their own conduct an example of true godliness, and promoting by their influence the spread of vital religion through the land, and taking care that as they ascend to the high places of national and municipal importance, they shall be known as the enemies of all ungodliness, and the friends and patrons of piety and virtue.

True religion, then, is not only the finishing grace, the brightest glory of a public man, but it is also the completeness of his qualifications for serving his generation. It adds, if his religion be sincere, and especially if it be eminent and consistent, the sanctity which inspires reverence to the ability which ensures confidence. For let men in their lighter moods smile, or even sneer at piety, when associated with feebleness of intellect or imperfections of conduct, they feel no disposition to do so when it is combined with robustness of understanding and sustained by uniform and unbroken consistency. Satan stood abashed before the Seraph and felt the awfulness of goodness. Religion, in a public functionary, when it is genuine, necessarily imparts those principles and virtues which are a guarantee for integrity, and

thus strengthens the grounds of trust in him. And if, as we have already shown, religion be indeed the most secure basis of national prosperity and happiness, how momentous is it that those who live and act so conspicuously before the public eye, should be seen invested with the beauties of holiness and clad in the robe of righteousness. And as only one greater blight of the kind could fall upon a country than a generally irreligious municipality and magistracy; so on the other hand next to a holy ministry a greater blessing could not be bestowed upon it than the general prevalence of religion among public men.

Let us then be deeply solicitous that this great nation may enjoy this blessing to a still greater extent than it does already, and let us be stirred up to earnest prayer that God would pour out his Spirit upon all our public functionaries. Let us enter more and more deeply into that beautiful apostrophe of the prophet, "Drop down, ye heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness. Let the earth open, and let them bring forth salvation, and let righteousness spring up together; I the Lord have created it." Let us seek and pray that the prophetic description of the Church of the New Covenant may, in some measure, be applicable to our beloved country "They shall call thee, the city of the Lord; the Zion of the Holy One of Israel; I will make thee an eternal excellency; the joy of many generations; I will also make thine officers peace and thine exactors righteousness. Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting or destruction within thy borders; but thou shalt call thy walls salvation, and thy gates praise. Thy people shall be all righteous, they shall

inherit the land for ever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified. The Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory."

Public spirit then, or a willingness by property and time, and labour and influence, to serve the institutions of our age, country, and the world, is incumbent upon all. It is despicable, yea guilty, at all times, but especially in times like these, to be so engrossed in the desire and art of getting money; or in the gratification of literary taste; or in the enjoyment of domestic comfort; or in the indulgence of personal ease; as to have no inclination to serve our generation, and improve the general and moral state of the age and the world. What would be the condition of our earth if all persons acted upon these selfish principles? It is on the contrary a noble sight, in which even angels and God himself delights, to behold a man sacrificing all these for the public welfare; living for others rather than for himself; and wearing out life in a service which is often as little appreciated as it is rewarded; and amidst ignorance, ingratitude, and even censure, holding on his useful career, under the approving smile of conscience and the testimony of God saying to him, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant."

But the Christian citizen does not connect himself merely with political, municipal, commercial, literary, or even benevolent institutions, these will have his proportionate support, but he in addition to his own personal example as a truly religious man, will lend his aid to organisations of christian zeal which have the evangelisation of the country and the world for their object. Our Bible, Missionary, and Religious Tract Societies; our

Home, City, and Town Missions; our systems of Sunday and day Schools, with all the other parts of the moral machinery set up in this active age for the benefit of our country and the world, will have his cordial support. He is anxious that others should enjoy those blessings of Christianity of which he experimentally knows the worth. We mourn to think that to many an otherwise enlightened and generous-hearted man, who really is, as far he knows, a friend of his country and his species, whose time and labours are ever at command for general purposes of benevolence, these things appear only as the bubbles of enthusiasm. Mistaken men! Will they deny, or do they forget what we have stated, that religion is humanity's best friend? That infidels should ridicule such efforts of Christian zeal is natural, though I would challenge even them on the question, whether Christianity is not better than Paganism or Mohammedanism, and whether, if all men acted upon the precepts and in the spirit of the gospel, ours would not be a wiser, a better and a happier world? But that men calling themselves Christians, should affect to ridicule the evangelistic institutions of our age is indeed surprising. If the Bible is good for us, is it not as good for others? If Christianity is of any worth to us, is it not of as much worth to the men at the ends of the earth? The Christian Citizen lending his aid to these sublime schemes of mercy is as far above the mere philanthropist, who leaves religion out of his view as heaven is above earth, or eternity of greater magnitude than time. Religious zeal is the omnipotence of mercy, the infinitude of charity, the eternity of benevolence, the very sublimity of compassion. It is the mind of Christ, the image of God, the fellowship of man with his Maker,

Redeemer, and Sanctifier, in his own eternal scheme of love for rescuing our world from the dominion of sin and misery, and restoring it to the enjoyment of holiness and happiness. Yet does it sometimes require no small degree of moral courage, no small measure of fixed principle and determined resolution, in a public man to go, and to be known to go, from a company of his fellows who have no sympathy with him in such things, to attend perhaps a missionary prayer meeting, or to preside over a committee of a Town Mission. Yet in that transition he is passing from one way of serving his age to another, which, viewed in relation to eternity, is infinitely more effectual than all the rest.

Hitherto our remarks have had reference chiefly to public men. Are these then the only persons who can serve their generation? It would be a hardship to the multitude if they were. The honour and privilege are within the reach of every one who desires them. I have said, and I abide by the affirmation, that religion is the world's best friend. He therefore who is a true believer in Christ, a holy man, a consistent professor of religion, is serving his generation. He may be a workman only, no matter, his industry, skill, and sobriety increase his employer's profits, and add therefore to the wealth of the kingdom. He is a unit, not a cipher, in his country's sum of prosperity. But further he adds something to the stock of national piety. His example, his prayers, and his influence are so much given to that righteousness which exalteth a nation. The opportunity of serving the age, the world, and posterity is given to every man. Religious, well-ordered families are the springs of a kingdom's greatness and felicity, and these are within the reach of all. It is not only the monarch, like David,

nor the minister of state, nor the senator, nor the judge, nor the magistrate, but the real Christian of every condition and every station of life that can serve his generation. In the obscurity of retirement, (says one, whose language I christianise and adopt,) amid the squalid poverty and revolting privations of a cottage, it has been sometimes my lot to witness scenes of faith in Christ, hope of heaven, and love to man; exhibitions of christian magnanimity and self-denial, as much beyond the belief as the practice of the great; a sacred heroism borrowing no support either from the gaze of the many or the admiration of the few, yet flourishing amidst the ruins of mortality and on the confines of the grave; a spectacle as stupendous in the moral world, as the falls of a mighty river in some obscure place of the natural, and like that mighty cataract doomed to display its grandeur chiefly in the eyes of its divine Author, because there are few eyes of men to witness or appreciate its magnificence. No, ye humbler classes, ye are not denied the opportunity of serving your generation according to the will of God. Let us all study our means, our opportunities, our responsibilities: our means are our opportunities, and our opportunities are our responsibilities.

II. The will of God is the ground and rule of our obligation to serve our generation. "David served his generation according to the will of God."

That the will of God furnishes the ground of obligation is evident both from his own conduct and his command. Has he not served it? Is he not ever serving it? He has given us this world for our dwelling-place, and fitted it up with every convenience and accommodation for social existence. He has made man a social being, and planted in his nature the social instinct, and

thus is the author of society itself. He has formed all the ties and originated all the charities which bind us to each other. He has instituted marriage, and given his sanction to government, leaving it however to men to choose their own forms of polity. He has "so loved the world as to give his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have eternal life," and thus shown the kindest interest in the welfare of man, and made way for that godliness which is "profitable for all things, having the promise of the life that now is as well as of that which is to come." He has given us the pattern of his own infinite benevolence to copy, and made his love the motive as well as the model of ours. He has provided by fixed laws for the perpetuation of our race, and so ordered it that one generation shall follow another in constant succession to the end of time. He has granted us all the advantages of nature, the varieties of products, according to climate and soil, and thus established a medium of intercourse, a bond of union between the nations, by making them dependent upon each other. To whatever department of Divine action we turn, therefore, we see God serving not only our generation, but every other, and not only our nation, but the world. Surely we may find in all this a ground of duty, a solemn bond, to promote the welfare of the age and country we live in.

And no less obvious is it that he has commanded all this. What is the import of all those passages of Holy Scripture, so numerous and so explicit, which command us "as we have opportunity to do good to all men;" to be "the salt of the earth, and the light of the world;" to be not only just but liberal;" to "let our light shine before men;" to be kind, courteous, affable? What

but so many exhortations to serve our generation? But if express injunction be necessary, take the thirteenth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, where the ends of government and the correlative duties of rulers and subjects are so explicitly stated; or that beautiful summary of the apostle Peter, "Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king." It is clear that God has taken the interests of society under his protection and made it every man's duty to promote them.

But the will of God must also be the rule of all we do, and this will is expressed in Holy Scripture. The Christian citizen makes this the guide of his conduct and is not ashamed to acknowledge that he does. Remind him that as a public man he is to make the Word of God the rule of his actions and he does not ask either with a look of surprise or a sneer of contempt, "What has the Bible to do with the conduct of a member or an officer of secular society?" He has learnt that the Bible is a book for all men, and for all occasions, in matters that involve moral obligations; and these enter more or less into all things. It is not merely a prayer-book, but a rule of action in ordinary life. It is a book for the magistrate as well as for the clergyman, for the court-house as well as for the church, and for regulating our moral principles in trade as well as in religion. So of religion, it consists of various elements of which devotion is only one. The man who seeks to promote the good of his country owns the Bible as his law; and he carries on his duty to his age and his country in obedience to this law. He does not only what is right, nor only because it is right, but because God has commanded it. It is a high and a noble principle of action to do a

thing simply because it is right; but it is a nobler still to make God's will the rule of right, and to feel that we are doing right because we are doing what God has commanded. Rectitude, I know, and not caprice, is the law of God's own nature, and the rule of his conduct, but it is his Word which makes known his views of right to us. A thing is not right merely because he wills it; but he wills it because it is right. This is the distinction between a Christian man and a merely just man. The latter will not be persuaded to do a wrong thing knowing it to be wrong, and will do all that is right because it is right. But all the while there may be no recognition of God's authority. The Christian man says, "I will do what is right, but I will learn what is right from God's Word: and in addition to the consideration of its rightness, I will do it because of its religiousness, or its being commanded by God." How blessed and dignified a life is it to turn the most common actions of life into true piety!

Here I would remark that as he who would serve his age and his country according to the will of God must and will observe a right order of action, so also he will not allow his energies to attenuate and expand into a vague cosmopolitan feeling which has no concentration, and therefore no power, and which seeks to construct a system of universal benevolence upon the destruction of individual tenderness. There are claims of locality, and the remoter and more general interests of a nation and the age are to be reached and promoted by endeavouring to promote the well-being of the place in which we reside. The order of nature and the order of true religion unite thus, each man is to begin with himself, and by God's grace is to lead a holy and virtuous life;

for society is composed of individuals, and if each were truly religious, all would be so; he is thus to give the force of his own godly example for the good of the community. He is then to train up his household in the fear of God: for the thorough understanding and good arrangement of the domestic constitution throughout a nation, or, in other words, pious and well-ordered families, are the springs of national strength, wealth, and happiness. Next he will be a zealous, though not a bigoted supporter of the church of which he is a member, being aware that religion and religious bodies are the best conservators of the peace and prosperity of the community. And then, while maintaining a regard to all these interests, he will look round upon the place of his residence, and feeling the claims that his neighbours as such have upon him, he will connect himself with its institutions and promote its welfare according to his means, talents, and opportunities, as they may be called forth by the necessities of the place or the demands of his fellow-citizens. They are near him; he knows their necessities and their claims. He is on terms of intercourse with them, receives benefits from them, and can bring his influence to bear more directly and more effectively upon them than upon others. His influence begins at home, though it does not end there, but goes out to the nation and the world. It was a direction given to the Jews how they were to conduct themselves even in reference to the place of their exile: "Seek the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captive, and pray unto the Lord for it, for in the peace thereof ye shall have peace."

A Christian citizen will, as all that we have hitherto said implies, make the religious interests of his place

of abode, country, and the world, the first and chief objects of his attention. These are first with God, first in the Holy Scriptures, first in reference to his own welfare, first as regards the well-being of a nation, and therefore first in his concern and pursuit. The Divine mind, as we have already shown, is intent upon the present well-being of the community, but it looks beyond this to an eternal world. God's chief concern for each of us is not that we should enjoy ourselves as well and as much as we can during our sojourn upon earth. He has an object before him more worthy of himself and of us, that we should be happy through the everlasting ages of our future existence. "The salvation that is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory," is the sublime intention of his mercy. This whole globe is too insignificant a boon for his infinite bounty to bestow upon any one of his children. He designs to make them "heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ." This earth is simply their training-place, their school-house for heaven; and all his dealings with us are intended as a discipline and probation for a higher, holier, and happier state of existence.

Even in the ordinary career of benevolence, or of religion as carried on by a person in private life, it is not enough to act merely upon the likings of taste, or the impulses of feeling; for he who goes no further than this does not serve his generation according to the will of God, but only according to his own will. Some may be ready to say, provided the good is done, it can be of no consequence from what motive it is done. It is no matter to the object of our benevolence I admit, but it is everything to ourselves. Motive characterises actions. God looks at the heart. There can be no

doubt that many a philanthropist, (as he is thought by others), and many a public character, are actuated only by motives of vanity, and are doing all their actions, not to obey God and glorify him, but to magnify themselves. We would be neither suspicious nor censorious, but we have not the most entire confidence in public virtue. Our Lord's words apply to other hypocrites than to those in religion, this "they do to be seen of men." However diffuse may be the private charities of men, or however splendid may be their public actions, it is only such as are done in obedience to the Divine command, and with a view to the Divine glory, that are serving their generation "according to the will of God."

It is, I know, an extremely difficult matter, and will require great watchfulness over the thoughts and intents of the heart, to keep up this purity of motive, and to suppress an undue regard to self. Vanity is likely to become the besetting sin of all public men, whether they be engaged in civil or in sacred matters. They who act before the public are strongly tempted to seek not only for public approval but for public applause. It is a most insidious passion, and is often in operation where least suspected, for "the heart is deceitful above all things, as well as desperately wicked." Few men are perfect in that virtue which is more anxious to be good and do right than to be thought so. Hence all who are most active for the good of their age and country should be men of much holy self-discipline and self-inspection.

And there is another way in which all who serve their generation are sometimes tempted to do so more according to their own will than the will of God; and that is not so much by thirsting after public applause, as

in a pertinacious contention for their own views. They cannot brook opposition, nor endure interference. They will serve, if it may be in their own way, but in no other. Their own will is their rule rather than even the will of God. Benefactors are sometimes bigots to self. Zeal has frequently the ardour of the metal half-fused with the stiffness of the cold bar. It is one of the loveliest sights in our world to see a man so intent upon doing good to his fellow-creatures as to care nothing whose scheme is adopted, provided it be the best for accomplishing the public good; such a man as could cheerfully sacrifice all his most cherished predilections, provided he could better serve the public by carrying out the schemes of others.

A Christian citizen will serve his generation only by such means as in his view accord with the will of God. He has made up his mind to do right, and only what is right, and has no sympathy with the false maxim, the end sanctifies the means. He cannot do evil that good may come. He has adopted his standard of right and wrong from the Bible, and under a Divine authority, and he will not swerve from it. His prayer is, "Let integrity and uprightness preserve me." Men, with what they consider a good object before them, are sometimes not over scrupulous about the means they employ: and yet it is very rarely the case that the object is good which is to be brought about by bad means. Good ends may be always sought by good means: if not they had better be abandoned. You attempt in vain to draw a right-minded, consistent Christian into participation in measures which implicate his truthfulness, his justice, his honour, his generosity. Falsehood and equivocation, injustice and unkindness, meanness and dishonour, are

not his instruments, just because they are wrong, and are therefore forbidden in the Word of God. Such a man carries his conscience with him into all his transactions. This, and not a hollow and shifting expediency, is the rule of his conduct. He is not a man of flexible morality and elastic utilitarianism. He knows he has made a profession of religion, and he knows that others know it too; and though he makes no ostentatious parade of his piety, he desires that his public conduct may square with it; so that no reproach may be brought upon his Christianity on account of his inconsistency. In pursuing the public good, he does not let down his religion to accommodate himself to his associates. When Christian men enter into public life, they are exposed to many temptations which never assailed them before. It is ever a test of principle and consistency, and many have failed when brought to the ordeal. It is well known there are some things considered quite innocent and proper by those who have not their strict views of religion; from which they however conscientiously abstain. The consistent man will not allow his situation in public life to break down the laws which he has prescribed for himself in private. To do that as a public man which he condemns as a private one, is to employ office and influence to sanction and perpetuate evil. Men may smile at his scruples, but they must admire his courage and his consistency. He does not allow the idea even of serving his generation to lead him to violate his conscience.

It is especially incumbent on the Christian citizen to take heed that his attention to secular things does not interfere with his proper regard to such as are sacred and spiritual. There is ever a danger of this, and perhaps

there are few who have been much engaged in serving the public who have not had to confess that in some measure their own personal godliness suffered by the service. Religious men ought not to retire from such service, especially those whose talents eminently qualify them for it; but being aware of the danger, they should most earnestly and assiduously watch against it. Where an individual seems rather sought out for such a situation, than seeking it for himself, there is less danger of his being injured by it, and he may all the more confidently look for protection from any moral danger to which he may be exposed. It is the impulsive vanity, the restless ambition of their own minds which push some men into public life, and which constitute their danger and destroy their religion.

Such then is the Christian citizen, a man whose public character rests upon the basis, and is influenced by the principles, of true religion; and whose religion does not consist only of a belief of the doctrines of the gospel, and observance of its forms of worship, or a support of its church government, but, while it includes all these, is manifested by an habitual fear of God and desire to do his will: whose prayer is, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" whose object it is to serve God and to do good to his fellow-creatures: whose penitence is ever sensitive that he does the will of God so imperfectly: whose faith is fixed for the pardon of all his defects on the blood of Christ which cleanseth from all sin: whose hope is directed to that bright and glorious world where he shall do the will of God as it is done in heaven. Such a man whether he move in public or in private life, is a Christian, and such an one only.

III. We now remark that the most exemplary piety and the most active benevolence do not exempt their possessors from the stroke of mortality. "David, after he had served his own generation, fell asleep, was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption."

Mark that word, he "fell asleep." By such a term, so soft, so gentle, so inviting, does the gospel speak of nature's supreme evil. Christ, who has subdued the thing, has changed the name that it might not have a frightful, but even a pleasant, sound in the ears of a Christian. The early Christians called their grave-yards the koimeterion, or "sleeping place," from which our English word, "cemetery," is a derivative. Under the Old Testament dispensation the same word "sleep" was occasionally used; but then it seemed rather to refer to the silence, darkness, and inactivity of the grave: but under that dispensation which brings life and immortality to light, it has a pleasanter and a brighter reference. To us it conveys the notion of repose. "I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth, yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them." Death is not permanent, it is transient, like sleep which suggests an awakening to follow. The state of the grave will, to the Christian, be an improvement, which is another of the ideas conveyed by the use of this word as the figure of death. Sleep is nature's balm for the sorrowful, and restorative for the sick and the weary, from which the healthful man wakes up refreshed and invigorated to meet the light of day with all the duties and enjoyments of life. Such is the grave to the real Christian, a resting place from which his body will rise up at the morning of the

resurrection. How soft and soothing the expression in reference to a departed friend, "He has fallen asleep in Jesus;" and how it tends to strip the last enemy of his terrors and our minds of the dread of his approach, to conceive of it as going to bed after the labours of the day, falling asleep and taking our repose. How it reconciles us to their loss. "If we saw them after the labours of a fatiguing day, or after a long fit of painful and languishing illness, fallen into a gentle slumber, and knew that their minds were during that interval entertained with visions of God, like those which the prophets saw, and raised to sublime and elevated devotion beyond what they had ever before felt; should we mourn over them because their senses were locked up, and they did not for that time see the light of the sun, nor hear such poor conversation as ours? Should we not rather rejoice and be tenderly solicitous to guard their sleeping moments, and watch that nothing might break in upon them, and call them down to earth and vanity too soon? And are not their slumbers now as sweet, and are not their visions now as bright and glorious? What though they do not breathe? What though their blood does not circulate and the curtains of the grave be drawn round them? Is there so much in those circumstances to give us anxiety and distress?"

"Ah," but you will say, "we should have a secret hope that our sleeping friends would wake again, and renewing the interrupted converse, relate to us what had passed in that interval; and we could with pleasure wait weeks and months in expectation of that." Nay, but will they not awake, though not so soon, and shall not we ourselves sleep with them, and ere long wake up

together, to renew our intercourse and perpetuate our holy friendship through everlasting ages?

Still the beauty of the figure vanishes, and in spite of this sacred poetry and christian hope, the dread reality of the grave comes back upon us, and we mournfully say, "Ah! but they are dead."

The death of persons distinguished above many of their race for service to their generation, especially when cut off before the term of threescore years and ten has expired, is often spoken of as one of the mysteries of Providence, especially when it is considered how many useless individuals are left as encumbrances, and how many mischievous ones as nuisances. The vine and the fig tree are cut down: the bramble, the briar, and the nettle are spared. The spring of living water is dried up; the stagnant, pestilential pool remains. There is however no mystery here. It would be mysterious if it were otherwise. God governs the world by general laws, though at the same time by minute providential arrangements; under two systems of operation, which co-exist without interfering with each other. To exempt the useful and distinguished members of the community from the ordinary lot of humanity, would require the intervention of a constant miracle. And can we look for this or wish it? It is the course of nature for the holy and the useful to be exposed to the operation of the same physiological laws as the foolish, the wicked, and the useless, and therefore they die according to the same order.

Heavy indeed is the loss which society sustains when any man eminent for public usefulness is removed. Multitudes go away from existence and leave no yawning chasm to mark their exit and no one to mourn their

absence. They can well be spared, for beyond their own immediate connexions, none remain to utter the lament over their grave, "Alas! my brother." While they lived they added nothing to society but number; and they served their generation more by removing than remaining, since they made way for more useful men. This is a mournful history for a rational and immortal creature, to inhabit God's world and not glorify him; to dwell amidst society and do nothing for its welfare; to restrain no evil, and promote no good; perhaps to have property, talent, time, and capability of influence, and still by allowing all to be swallowed up in a selfish egotism, to live unrespected, to die unlamented, and to be missed only as one that stood in the way of others. How discreditable and how contemptible is it for any one so to live as to compel the spectators of his funeral as they behold the few and unmoved followers of the corpse, to exclaim,

> "What, and not one to heave the pious sigh,
> Not one whose sorrow-swoll'n and aching eye,
> For social scenes and life's endearments fled,
> Shall drop a tear and dwell upon the dead."

How different the case of him who serves his generation. When he dies, the family from which he is taken is but the inner and smaller circle of grief, while the outer and wider ones are the church of Christ and the world. Long is the train of mourners at his obsequies, and many the tears that are shed upon his bier, while a thousand tongues sorrowfully exclaim, "He is gone, the friend, the benefactor, the good, just man. How he will be missed by all who knew his worth!" And yet it might prove a check to pride, a salutary restraint upon excessive self-valuation, and a sedative to our grief on the loss of

valued and valuable men, to observe the restorative power which society, like the human frame, possesses and exerts, by calling out other energies to heal its wounds and repair its losses. It would astonish, humble, and perhaps somewhat mortify, the most useful member of a church or of society, could he look forward and see how soon and how completely with absolute certainty his vacant place would be supplied. The stream of time is bearing, with few exceptions, all names to the gulf of oblivion. It is our wisdom, therefore, as well as our duty, to obtain a name and a place in the region of immortality, where we shall never be forgotton, for none of us can secure either, for a very long time, in this mortal state. This world will go on without any of us; the wheels of society will roll over our grave, and its interests be upheld and flourish when we are mouldered to dust.

Yet, as a heathen poet said of himself, so may we say of all good men, and especially of those who have in any measure added greatness and usefulness to goodness, all that belongs to them will not die when they themselves depart. Though, as we have just said, all are destined to oblivion, many have a longer way to it than others, and a somewhat more lasting memorial on earth. "The memory of the just is blessed. The righteous shall be held in everlasting remembrance." This of course appertains, in its full meaning, only to the more eminent of even the great, the wise, and the good. But in one way or other every man's name and character will live in the minds of some other men. No one is instantly and entirely forgotten. Every man exerts an influence over some persons while he lives, and it is therefore of great consequence both to ourselves and to others, that

we should consider what kind of power, as we walk along through this crowded world, we are exerting upon the multitudes that touch us on every hand. For we are all and always giving out and receiving influence; a solemn thought. But there is another subject little considered indeed, but of immense importance, and that is, the moral influence we exert after death. There is something appertaining to us all, either good or bad, of which it will be truly said after we are gone, "By it he being dead, yet speaketh." From every one of the dead a voice is heard in some circle of the world's inhabitants, which the knell of their departure does not drown, which neither the earth and the green sod, nor the sculptured tomb, can muffle, and which will be awakened in distinctly intelligible sounds every time their name is mentioned. Our friends live in our memories not only as to their forms and their features, but as to their virtues or their vices. And just in proportion to the width of the sphere in which the departed moved, and the strength of intellectual and moral character they possessed and developed, will be the duration and the plastic power of the influence they have left behind. We may bury their bodies and erect their monuments, but the consequences of their lives may remain when both have crumbled into dust and their very names are forgotten. How pleasing, how edifying, how improving, is it to dwell on the excellences of the departed. We then, as compared with the manner in which we looked at them during their lives, invert the order with which we take a survey of their character. While they are with us, the worst part of our nature frequently comes into operation, and through envy, jealousy, and uncharitableness, we are but too prone to magnify their failings

and diminish their virtues; but after their removal, the holier affections of our hearts are uppermost, and we lose sight of their failings and fix our attention almost exclusively upon their excellences; and thus look at their character with admiration when it is divested of all that tended on earth to impair its influence, and when it is invested with something of a heavenly radiance. Thus the recollection of departed worth, when its beauty is seen associated with scarcely anything to impair it, is oftentimes more powerful in the way of example than the constant contemplation of it was while yet it was before our eyes.

To themselves, what a release does the removal of our Christian friends bring with it. To repeat a passage already quoted, "They rest from their labours." They have departed to be with Christ, and to be for ever with the Lord. They have fought a good fight, they have finished their course, they have kept the faith, and henceforth there is laid up for them a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give them at that day. They have reached that world of which it is so simply and so beautifully said, "There, his servants shall serve him." It is their unutterable honour and delight,

> "To fly as on a cherub's wing,
> As with a seraph's voice to sing,
> Performing with unwearied hands,
> A present Saviour's high commands."

We have fallen into a great mistake if we suppose that heaven is a state of mere voluptuous and indolent repose: as if its blessed inhabitants had nothing to do but to recline for ever upon the banks of the crystal stream which proceedeth from the throne of God and the

Lamb; to quaff its living waters, and beneath the outspread branches of the tree of life, without occupation, to luxuriate upon its immortal fruits. Heaven is a state of action, where the glorified soul will be united to a body incorruptible, spiritual, immortal, powerful and glorious, and the powers of both be called forth to the uttermost in the service of God. In what way that service will be conducted, to what matters of duty it will relate, and in what sphere of activity it will be carried forward, we are not informed and cannot conjecture, "It doth not yet appear what we shall be." An undefined magnificence, a grand and awful mystery, surround the subject of our future state. "Such a stupendous reality thus mysteriously veiled, or only dimly seen, attracts thinking spirits most mightily, like the mystic and awful recess in the inmost part of the temple. It keeps in action inquisitiveness, conjecture, expectation. It sets the mind upon imagining the utmost that it can of grandeur and importance, and the idea still is after the utmost efforts, "It is far greater than even all that." How truly is it said, and how instructively also, "We walk by faith, and not by sight." This is to be the grand actuating principle of our feelings and conduct respecting hereafter.

It may be seen very clearly from such a subject how close a connection subsists between our earthly and our heavenly state. Our Lord's prayer teaches us that God's will is done in heaven, constantly, willingly, perfectly; and that it is our business on earth to approach as near as we can to that perfect service above. And does it not teach us more than this? That we are to prepare to do the will of God in heaven by doing it as perfectly as we can on earth. What awful mistakes are

made by multitudes concerning the celestial world: both as to the nature of its felicity and the meetness requisite for enjoying it. Whatever else is concealed from us concerning the heavenly state, this is made known, it is the everlasting service of God, it is doing his will perfectly, cheerfully, lovingly, and for ever. Think you such a state requires no training? No meetness? And must not the training and meetness accord with the state itself? A holy, constant, humble, and loving desire to do the will of God on earth as the one supreme law of existence: a sincere, habitual effort to serve and please him as the rule, above all other rules, of our being; a laborious, self-denying subjugation of our will to his will, as the paramount duty of life; this is religion; this is the training required for the celestial kingdom. It is not even serving our generation alone, viewed apart from doing it in compliance with the will of God, that constitutes true religion now or a meetness for heaven hereafter; for religion and heaven have direct reference to God himself. "Not every one," said Christ, "that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." There may be much of public spirit, of humane feeling, of true philanthropy, of enlightened and generous patriotism; but if with all this there be no reference to the will of God, no recognition of his authority, no regard to his approval, there is, there can be, no meetness or training for the service of God above. It is that stern sense of duty arising from a belief in God, carrying a man forward in his public or private career, through evil report and good report, amidst opposition and annoyance, in cases requiring almost the courage of a hero and the constancy of a martyr; it is, I say,

this moving onward through difficulty and danger under the potency of the mighty impulse, that God wills it, that fits us to take our place among the servants who serve the Lord for ever in the kingdom of his glory, where all opposition and all difficulty will have ceased, and to do his will be as easy as to live, and his service will be the perfection of holiness, of freedom, and of bliss.

IV. I come now to that part of the discourse from which I fear I have detained your impatient curiosity too long; I mean some direct reference to him, whose lamented decease has given occasion to it. In the selection of the passage which has formed its subject, I was not so blinded by affection, or so misled by fraternal vanity, as to suppose it applied to my dear brother in stricter propriety, or in wider extent, than to many others; but that it is in some measure descriptive of his useful life, none I believe that knew him, will be disposed to deny. Had he lived only to serve himself, he would in all probability have been still with us: yet who that loved him could wish that his life had been protracted on such inglorious terms? A man's existence is to be measured, valued, and coveted, not so much by the years he lives, as by the work he does; and estimated by this standard, my brother lived to a good old age.

The basis of his future character was laid in early piety, and an earnest endeavour to cultivate his mind when young, by reading and thinking. He entered upon the world's dangerous stage with the principles of true religion deeply rooted in his heart, which enabled him to stand the test of evil example, persecution, and the snares of infidelity; to all of which, at his setting out in life, he was exposed; and if he attained to any dis-

tinction or usefulness in society, it may be traced up to the fact that "he feared God from his youth."

My brother has been a resident in this town about thirty-six years, through all which he has of course been connected with this church; and during thirty of these years has served it as one of its deacons, and has ever been one of the most active and useful of its members. From the time of his coming among us he took a very deep and practical interest in our Sunday schools, and not less so latterly in our numerous day schools. Of the former he was for many years the superintendent, and of both to the time of his death, the chairman and treasurer. He was an active promoter of the great work of erecting this chapel, subsequently of the new school-rooms and lecture-room, and a liberal contributor to both; for his ear was never deaf, nor his hand ever slack, nor his purse closed, when the call of humanity, religion, or the public welfare, in any way required his assistance. In some cases he was profuse, in all liberal. He was one of the founders of our Brotherly Society, an institution which, from deep solicitude for our young men, he watched as its president to the close of life, with ceaseless vigilance and anxious interest. The Provident Society also, now so flourishing, is in no small measure to be traced to his benevolent and active mind, ever concerned as he was for the welfare of the labouring classes for both worlds. Yea, what was there ever going on for the benefit of this congregation, even to the periodical accommodation of those who applied for pews, in which he did not bear a principal and active part? And as if to leave us with a still stronger claim than ever upon our gratitude to his memory, I may mention

that it is to his proposal, activity, and liberality, that we owe the noble and successful effort lately made to liquidate the heavy debt which still remained upon these premises; and I can scarcely help regarding it as a special interposition of Providence, that his mind should have been so earnestly directed to this subject just at the time he was about to leave us. If in the duties of the deacon's office he was less active than some others, it must be attributed to his having been so much occupied in those various duties which arose out of the municipal obligations which he so laboriously and conscientiously endeavoured to discharge: and it was among his dying regrets that his public services had called him so much away from the interests of the church. Public men often feel the difficulty of deciding between clashing duties, the precise measure of time and attention to be allotted to each. Instead, however, of being surprised that he gave no more time to us, many were surprised that he gave us so much. He dwelt in his later years more upon the calm and tranquil nature of that business which stands connected with the working of a united, peaceful, and happy Christian church, compared with those scenes which, in such a world as ours, must occur even in the best conducted municipal institutions, where differences of opinion, contention, and even censure, will sometimes arise to agitate the feelings and corrode the heart. Public men, to serve their generation, make great sacrifices, not only of time and money, but of personal ease, literary enjoyment, domestic comfort, and mental tranquillity, sacrifices not always appreciated nor adequately rewarded by the thanks of those for whom they are gratuitously rendered.

I have no need to ask from the members of this

church and congregation, a place in their memory for him they have lost; his services to them as a community, as well as his many acts of kindness to individuals in the way of counsel and other more substantial assistance, will ever lead them to mention his name with feelings of gratitude and respect. Three words form the epitaph which they would inscribe on his monument: "beloved, esteemed, lamented." The tokens of their regard which were manifested at his interment, place the estimation in which he was held by them beyond all doubt or question; and for them, my dear friends, I take this opportunity to offer you my sincere and cordial thanks. Nor is it only on this mournful occasion that you have expressed your sympathy; others still more mournful to myself have occurred, in which your affection was no less prompt, tender, and emphatic. All the trials, and they have been neither few nor small, which I have had to endure since my residence for nearly half a century among you, have come directly from the hand of God: none of them from you. I thank you for all your past kindnesses: injuries I have received none: for your present sympathy, even as I confidently trust you for all that forbearance and kindness which the future may require. That our loss by the death of my brother is great, I shall be the last man to deny. To me it is, of course, in some sense irreparable; but I cannot be so forgetful of the ever-living source of excellence, nor of the numerous streams which, in the continued life of so many beloved and valued friends, flow through our Zion, as to feel that our sanctuary is desolated by this bereavement. The ways of Zion do mourn because one of her sons has fallen; but her gates do not languish because none other come to her feasts. Jehovah-Jesus still

lives, and while he lives, die who may, the church is safe, though the invasion of the king of terrors extend from the pew to the pulpit.

Passing from the hallowed circle of the church of Christ into the wider sphere of this present world, my dear brother was neither unknown nor useless there. Very early in life, and for several years before he came to this town, he manifested a disposition and a capability for public business, and was called to it; and it was in that smaller sphere, when attempting to promote the interests of his native place, that he received the germs of those qualities which have developed, may I be permitted to say, so much to the advantage of this important town. Here he has passed through every office to which the suffrages of his fellow townsmen could elect him,* and received every honour which they could confer upon him, all of which he has now laid down without a spot upon his reputation, a suspicion of his integrity, or a shade of reproach passing over his memory. From the testimony of respect paid at the time of his obsequies, it may be presumed it was the general opinion he had in some measure served his generation. Not that I claim for him a larger share of gratitude from the public than is due to many who acted with him. That he was a man of upright intentions, none I believe will venture to deny. For men who fill public, and especially magisterial offices, a constant and unvarying regard to unimpeachable integrity is an essential attribute. The

* He served the office of Guardian of the Poor, Low Bailiff, Trustee of Lench's Charity, Commissioner o the Town, Alderman, Mayor, Borough Magistrate; and beyond the circle of the town was one of the Supplemental Provincial Directors of the London and North Western Railway.—Author's Note.

throne of justice is even a higher place of morality for them than the seat of mercy. The claims of equity are first to be consulted, and its rights established before the pleas of mercy can be heard. But happy is he, (and may I not hope such was the subject of this discourse?) who is both the just man, for whom any one would scarcely die, and the benevolent man for whom some would even dare to die. That it was his wish, his aim, and generally his success, to do right, they who had an opportunity best to know his public conduct will bear witness. And even when others differed from him, as of course among independent men they sometimes would, they were confident of the rectitude of his intentions and the purity of his motives. They could always trust his heart and generally his head.

It is not for me to say what service he actually rendered to the town, but I can speak of the solicitude which I have witnessed in private, that his public duties might be efficiently performed; and well do I remember his painful anxiety to carry an important measure brought by himself before the Corporation, which he thought would promote the moral and religious, as well as the economical and domestic, interests of the labouring classes. In this however he was unsuccessful, and the failure of the scheme and the frustration of his hopes, was the occasion of much distress to him.*

That as a public man he had some qualities which

* This referred to a proposed Act of Parliament for sanitary reform and the repression of crime in the borough, which was lost only by the casting vote of the Mayor. All the regulations which it was sought to introduce are now in force for all boroughs, under a general measure, except one, that for the registration of the dealers in "marine stores." Their immunities are still preserved in Birmingham as in most other places.—Ed.

made his career less facile and pleasant, I cannot deny. Possessed of a mind somewhat too sensitive, he was liable to that inward friction of the soul, which more than even the pressure of business, wears down the constitution. Things sometimes pierced his heart which would have scarcely grazed many other men's skin. Happy is the man who can leave his anxieties in the council-chamber and the court-house; he could not, but carried them home to his fireside, his chamber, and his pillow; and they kept him wakeful, musing, and sometimes sad, when others would have forgotten them in the oblivion of sleep. Public men, I have sometimes thought, as regards their official duties should, like surgeons, have clear intellects, a steady hand, and a determined will, but comparatively little emotion.

To his family and observant friends my brother exhibited during the last year, symptoms of incipient decay, which have awakened their fears and excited their apprehensions. Evidence, which has come to light since his death, of complicated disease, too plainly shews with what interruptions of bodily ease and mental tranquillity he must have been long struggling.

It is the unhappiness of some men to live too long for their reputation; less perhaps from any weakening of moral principle, than from those caprices of temper and eccentricities of conduct, which are the result of bodily infirmity and mental decline. My brother and his friends were spared this humiliation in his case. He died in the ripeness of his reputation, before a speck of wintry decay had been suffered to blight it, or to change the illustration, his sun went down earlier than that of some others, but no clouds gathered round it to obscure its lustre at the setting, and render it a matter of regret

that it had not left the horizon before. How he was regarded to the last by those with whom he had been accustomed to act in the Corporation and the Magistracy, and who best knew him, was demonstrated by the spontaneous token of honour with which they graced his obsequies, and for which I tender to them the thanks of his surviving relatives.

His last scenes of life were, as regards physical suffering, unusually painful, and such as constituted death, in his case, the king of terrors. He had a rough access to the gate of eternal life, a stormy entrance into the haven of everlasting repose. His frame of mind in prospect of dissolution, which for weeks stood before him, was, as far as the terrific rending of his mortal frame would allow of connected thought and articulate expression, that of calm resignation to the will of God, attended with profound humilition on account of his manifold offences, and a reliance for pardon and acceptance upon the atonement of Christ. The language of deepest penitence was, as he declared, that which was most congenial to his feelings, as a proof and expression of which, he quoted with great emotion that fine passage of the patriarch of Uz, "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee; wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." My conversation with him as he passed through the dark valley of the shadow of death, was, when a cessation of suffering allowed, of that happy land where christian friends shall be gathered together unto Christ never more to part. He has now passed the stream which separates that heavenly land from ours; and after lifting his last step from the wave and looking wonderingly back on its dark waters gilded with the light of immortality and

rippling peacefully on the eternal shore, has taken his place among the spirits of just men made perfect, as an inhabitant of the celestial kingdom, a citizen of the New Jerusalem.

I shall make no attempt to sketch my brother's character. What he was as a father his family know, and will ever remember with gratitude and affection, and to them chiefly this knowledge appertains. What as a brother, our sad and bereaved hearts know and feel. What as a master, how just, how considerate, how humane, his work-people have demonstrated by their tears, and will ever testify by their words. What as a manufacturer, how upright, honourable, and conscientious, all who transacted business with him can declare. What as a man, how courteous, generous, and abhorrent of all that was mean, selfish, and low, all who knew him will bear witness. What as a Christian, the crown and glory of character, this congregation and multitudes beyond it will attest. What as a magistrate, and public functionary in other relations, those who acted with him testify with admiration. He had his faults, and he knew and regretted them. By some it was thought that his catholicity of spirit verged on latitudinarianism; that his dislike of ultraism both in civil and sacred politics produced occasionally a little indecision on great questions, that his devotedness to municipal matters sometimes diverted his attention from other things of importance to his denomination or religion, and to the world at large; that his earnestness to carry measures which he believed for the public good, sometimes made him somewhat impetuous and impatient of opposition; that his sensitiveness sometimes subjected him to be wounded, though not to be offended, and that his atten-

tion to the secular matters of his generation withdrew his attention a little more from what is spiritual than was desirable. This might be correct, and perhaps it partially was; but as regards the whatsoever things are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report, that great apostolic rule for the Christian citizen, I have known few who have excelled him in the virtue and the praise of thinking of and practising these things.

And now, in conclusion, what words of admonition shall I utter, what solemn accents shall I breathe forth on this assembly? With this instance of mortality before us, let us meditate on our latter end. We too are mortal, let us prepare to die. We are immortal, let us prepare to live. Our fellow-men are dying around us, and we are dying with them. If the multitude die as unnoticed by the public as the fall of the autumnal leaf in the pathless forest, not so the lamented individual whose decease we now mourn. His decease has attracted general attention. Death has been the common topic for a brief season by very many in this large and busy town, it has obtruded itself on many minds, diffused a seriousness over many countenances, and made the latter end of man contemplated even from the busy scenes of trade. A voice floats over us all, in tones loud, deep, solemn, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave, whither thou goest."

Eternal God, bend from thy throne and give us thy grace, that each may respond to that call, in the language of inspiration: "So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom."

THE DYING MINISTER'S REFLECTIONS AND ANTICIPATIONS.

A SERMON,

PREACHED ON SABBATH DAY, OCTOBER 2ND, 1853,

TO THE CONGREGATION ASSEMBLING

AT THE MEETING HOUSE, BLANDFORD,

ON OCCASION OF THE

DEATH OF THEIR LATE PASTOR, THE REV. RICHARD KEYNES.

2 Tim. iv, 7-8.

I have fought a good fight; I have finished my course; I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous Judge shall give me at that day, and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

There is in many persons a propensity to penetrate the secrets of a dying chamber, which almost seems instinctive, a kind of irresistible curiosity to know how men acquit themselves in their conflict with the last enemy. At this we are scarcely surprised. There is something so awful and mysterious in death, and withal it is an event which will so certainly happen to themselves, that they seem desirous, almost unconsciously, to gain some instruction or consolation for their own closing scenes of existence, from the knowledge of the manner in which their neighbours and friends met theirs. In perusing the life of any individual we hasten onward to his death, and with a deepening interest ponder over the dread scene. This feeling is more powerfully excited by the decease of a distinguished person, than it is by that of others less known to fortune or to fame. The text brings before us a dying apostle. Not

that when he wrote these words, he was actually in the crisis of dissolution; but he was in the near prospect of it. He knew either by revelation or by observation, that he had not long to live; and we cannot but admire the dignified composure and holy fortitude with which he contemplated the approach of the king of terrors, even when coming to him in the form of martyrdom. "I am now ready to be offered up." In this language he represents himself as standing like a victim prepared for sacrifice, at the foot of the altar, and willing to be immolated for the faith which he professed. This is in exact accordance with what he had said on another occasion. "Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all." What holy magnanimity! What noble heroism! "The time of my departure is at hand," as if, instead of a violent death he was contemplating a journey of pleasure, profit, or fame. Such tranquillity can a good hope through grace produce in the breast, not only of the expiring Christian, but of the dying martyr. And why this composure? From the retrospect of the past and the anticipation of the future. Every thing he looked back upon was pleasant; every thing he looked forward to was glorious.

I. Let us consider his survey of life.

It is a very solemn thing for a rational, immortal, and responsible creature, to take account of himself, and scrutinise amidst the light of opening eternity the whole series of his actions and his motives in relation to that Great Being in whose presence he is shortly to stand: to measure himself by the standard of God's perfect law, and weigh himself in the balances of the sanctuary. Paul did so; and "without partiality and without

hypocrisy," he could say, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." In this language we have the christian life described by a threefold figure.

It is a warfare. "I have fought a good fight." Such every part of the word of God represents, and the experience of all Christians finds, it to be. Every true believer is a good soldier of Jesus Christ. His leader is the captain of our salvation. His enemies are the world, the flesh, and the devil. His battle field is every where without him, and is also within him. His weapons are not carnal but spiritual, even the whole armour of God. His victories, obtained amidst some defeats, are the achievements of faith, hope, and love. His conflict is interminable till he has subdued the last enemy, which is death. This representation implies the determined resolution, the heroic courage, the indomitable vigilance, the loyal and unswerving fidelity to Christ, which true religion requires and involves. It is indeed a great fight: and it is a good fight too. It is no unjust or unnecessary war, unless the conflict of knowledge against ignorance, of truth against error, of holiness against sin, and of happiness against misery, can be so called. It is the combination of all good beings against all bad ones; the conflict of all that can elevate, adorn, and bless humanity, against all that can corrupt, degrade, and curse it. In this warfare the apostle had engaged, with the valour of a hero, and the success of a victor, and was now returning from the field, crowned with unsullied laurels, to receive his eternal reward. And no man can enter heaven but from this scene of conflict, and without fighting his way there at every step of his progress.

The christian life is a race. "I have finished my course." He had so nearly done it, and was so sure of completing it, that he uses the past instead of the future tense; just as did his Divine Lord when he said, in the prospect of his death, "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." The apostle in his triumphant language, alludes, no doubt, to the public national games so celebrated in Grecian history, and especially to the foot race. If we may judge by the frequency with which he uses it, this was a favourite figure with him. How striking is his exhortation to the Corinthians, "Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown but we an incorruptible one." How bold is his language to the Hebrews. "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith." How beautiful his description of his own course of life. "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended; but this one thing I do, forgetting those things that are behind, and reaching forth unto the things which are before, I press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." What does the striking figure of a race imply? That all our religious activities must be regulated by the word of God, which has marked out the course for us. That the most intense solicitude, self-denying preparation, eager ambition, earnest endeavour, and unwearied perseverance, must be maintained by the

Christian; such, for instance, as was cherished and exhibited by the ancient competitors for the Olympic or Isthmian garland. All this the apostle had maintained. He had run his race; he had never turned aside; and was now within sight of the goal. We must run this same race, in the same manner; and if we win the crown, it will be but as by a hair's breadth, for the righteous are scarcely saved. Every muscle, so to speak, must be strained, every nerve drawn out to its greatest tension, and every energy pressed into the service, or we shall never win the prize.

The apostle in his description of the christian life, adds the fidelity of the steward to the courage of the soldier, and the perseverance of the racer. "I have kept the faith." He does not mean the principle of faith, which by the grace of God he had received as a Christian, but the doctrine of faith which had been committed to him as an apostle; of which he says so emphatically, "I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." He was a separate and independent witness of the truth of the gospel; and furnished by his conversion and subsequent ministry, an additional and powerful proof of the Divine origin of the Christian religion. "The faith" is a frequent description of the gospel of our salvation, carrying with it the import, that the great objects of Christianity are matters of belief and not of vision; a something believed, without being known by sense. This faith the apostle received as an inestimable treasure, to enrich and bless an impoverished world; in reference to which he said, "We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us." "Having nothing, yet

possessing all things." "As poor, yet making many rich." He admonished Timothy and Titus to "hold fast the form of sound words," and "that good thing which had been committed to them." How well did he enforce this by his own example. What he had received as a steward, he retained and improved with a steward's fidelity, and never suffered it to be wrested from his hands by the violence of persecution; nor to be corrupted in them, either by the arts of a vain and deceitful philosophy, or by the traditions of Jewish bigotry and formalism. It was a glorious spectacle to see him holding forth through life the heaven-kindled lamp of eternal truth which had been put into his hands on his way to Damascus, and now, on the borders of eternity, throwing forward its light to illuminate the dark passage of the tomb for himself, and then turning it back to guide the feet of those who were following him. Whoever made shipwreck of the faith, he maintained his course.

And is it not a subject for admiration and congratulation, as in the case of our departed friend, to see a minister of Christ, with a strong, bold, and independent mind, (that takes nothing upon trust, and has examined everything for itself,) passing through all the assaults by which, during a long life, his faith is tried, yet holding it fast against the sophistries of false doctrines, and the seductions of new ones; reposing as a Christian in his old age, and while conscious in his sick chamber, upon the truths which he had promulgated from the pulpit; confirming by his dying experience the creed which he had professed in his ordination service; and recommending with the solemn eloquence of his parting breath, the truths which he had so long and so earnestly expressed by his living voice. On the contrary, how

affecting is the spectacle, which we sometimes see, of a minister arriving at the end of his course, an apostate from the truths which he once declared himself willing to seal with his blood, and which millions had sealed with theirs. We impugn no man's motives, and do not deny that some have conscientiously, though with a blinded conscience, passed from truth to error, as others do from error to truth. In some cases there has been no mystery in the change: the state of the heart has had its influence upon the head, and truths have been abandoned which had ceased to exert their appropriate influence upon the character and had at length been found an unwelcome incumbrance. It is a fearful thing to abandon the great and glorious verities of the revelation of God for the inventions of men. What is it but to take down the lamps of a lighthouse, which were intended to warn the passing ships against dangerous rocks, and to hang out false lights, which will lead them to destruction? Never was there a greater danger of this than in the present day, when the prevailing scepticism of the world is gaining an entrance into the church. May the God of truth preserve our ministers from the machinations of that arch foe, who though the father of lies, can transform himself into an angel of light; and is never more seductive or more successful, than when he comes arrayed in the garb of a false philosophy!

It may now be asked with what disposition of mind the apostle uttered the language of the text. We may be quite sure these expressions were not the effusions of pride fed by self-admiration; nor the boast of a vainglorious mind, covetous of human applause; nor the aspirations of ambition writing for posthumous renown. Our knowledge of Paul's history and of his deep sense

of his unworthiness, forbids us to ascribe to him such views and feelings as these. Profound humility was one of the most prominent traits in the character of that illustrious man, the softening medium through which his blazing virtues shine forth upon us; the semi-transparent veil, which in part conceals his excellence, yet reveals more than it hides.

It was the language of conscious sincerity and self-recognising integrity, uttered in the same manly tones, as were those similar expressions, which came from his pen during the mid-day of his zeal, and the ardour of his living labours. "Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity; not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world." He loved his Saviour, and never doubted that he loved him. He had espoused his cause, and he knew he had. He had served his master from pure motives, and was conscious of it. No false humility, no knowledge of imperfection, no sense of defect, no affected modesty, hindered him from asserting his attachment to the Lord, and his zeal in his service. "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." It was not a doubting, halting, hesitating declaration; but an expression of settled and joyful conviction. What means that timidity, that doubting frame, that fear of sincerity, which are so common among professors of religion, and which are encouraged by the sermons of some preachers of it? Is it, can it be right, to be always questioning whether we are fighting the good fight, running the christian race, and keeping the faith? Is it our Father's intention that we should be ever in ignorance of our sonship? Is there no such thing as the witness of the

Spirit that we are the children of God? Did not the apostle say, "By this we know we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren?" It is everywhere taken for granted in the Scriptures that a child of God may, and should, know his filial relation to God. It will not do to leave this momentous question unsettled, till we are upon the bank of the dark, cold stream of death, and then to stand there shivering with doubt and dread, and ignorant on what shore we shall emerge from the river of mortality. Let us seek, and be contented with nothing less than, a faith so strong, a hope so lively, a love so fervent, a life so holy, as to be their own evidence both to ourselves and others.

The apostle in these beautiful words uttered the language of adoring gratitude. If on another occasion, when looking back on his Jewish bigotry, and his wicked persecution of the christian church, and contrasting his enmity to Christ as a blind and infatuated Israelite, with his love to him as a believer, and his service as an apostle, he felt his soul filled with such a sense of obligation as compelled him to say, "By the grace of God, I am what I am;" how ineffable must have been his emotions of love and gratitude now, when he felt himself preserved by the power of God through faith unto salvation. What scenes he had passed through since the time of his conversion. How many and varied had been his temptations; how bitter his persecutions; how laborious his services; how onerous his duties; how responsible his situation; and now he felt himself carried successfully through all! And what Christian, especially what minister, and most of all what aged minister, who has been carried through a long life, holy in conduct, sound in doctrine, and successful in labour,

must not in reviewing life be filled with an adoring wonder, gratitude, and love to Him, whose grace had been the source of all?

The language of the apostle was intended to express the approbation and satisfaction which he felt, in looking back upon the course which he had pursued. He was now reviewing it from the point of view which enabled him most correctly to form a right judgment as to his wisdom in selecting the object of his life, and as to the propriety of his conduct in reference to it. True he merely announces the fact, and only describes his career, without actually pronouncing a sentence of condemnation or approval; but he evidently intended to convey the idea of his entire satisfaction. He uttered it with a feeling of complacency, and under the smile of an applauding conscience. There was not a particle of pharasaic pride or of self-elation; no self-worship; no vain glory; but on the contrary, there was no doubt the deep consciousness of defect, and profound humiliation for numberless imperfections: yet there was, at the same time, an unutterable delight in considering that his life had been spent for Christ. And happy is every man, who, on looking back upon his earthly course, can approve the object which he has chosen as the supreme end of existence, and the manner in which his life has passed away in the pursuit of it. Who, when God and conscience say to him, "What have you done with life? how have you employed your faculties? to what have you given your time, which, next to life, is the best of God's providential gifts?" can reply, "I have fought a good fight, I now on the solemn review of existence can say, that I have not thrown away life. I have not spent my time upon an unworthy object.

I have not lived in vain. My existence has not been a blank. Now when it is nearly all gone, I am satisfied with my choice, though I am deeply humbled for the imperfect manner in which I have pursued it, and that I have not with more intense, and entire, and pure zeal, served the Lord." How blissful, though mixed with the deepest self-abasement for his deficiencies, is the reflection of the faithful minister, who, at the close of existence, and in prospect of eternity can say, "I believe I have not mistaken, nor have I forgotten the end of my ministry. If my heart does not greatly deceive me, I have kept in mind, though alas, not so much as I should have done, the object of my high vocation. My life has been spent in preaching God's truth, converting men's souls, and building up Christ's kingdom." And on the other hand, how awful is it for any one on his death bed to have to say, "I now see I have lived in vain; I cannot look back upon my existence with the least satisfaction. I have lived, and never shall or can have but one life on earth, and that has been to a considerable extent thrown away. I have squandered my precious years upon trifles. Life with me has been a lost adventure." And then for a minister to say, "I have been a loiterer and not a labourer in the vineyard. As a preacher my sermons have been more to exalt self than Christ; more to display genius than to exhibit the gospel; more to please than to profit; more to gain men's applause than to save their souls! As a pastor I have been more solicitous to receive the attentions, enjoy the hospitalities, and secure the good will of my flock, than to promote their eternal welfare." How painful is this! May God preserve our ministers from such reflections, and from all just reason for them.

The apostle used the language of the text for the encouragement of others. It was his testimony to the grace and faithfulness of God, uttered for the benefit of Timothy and all who were to come after him. Christians, and especially ministers, should bear their testimony, not only upon their death beds, but in the decline of life, to the power and faithful love of God in their preservation: and it should be a subject of prayer, not only that they may be kept in faith and holiness to the end of their life, but that the circumstances of their death may be so ordered, as that they may finish their course with joy. The saying "Don't tell me how a man died; tell me how he lived," is ascribed to the excellent John Newton, and it is a just sentiment. The previous life is undoubtedly the surest criterion of the safety of our state. Still a death unclouded by delirium, or undisturbed by gloomy apprehensions; the clear exercise of the intellect, and the enjoyment of a hope full of immortality, are eminently desirable, not only for the comfort of the dying Christian himself, and the consolation of his friends, but as a testimony to the power and excellence of a true faith. Although the reality, the glory, and the utility of the sun, are manifested by his daily course through the heavens, and depend not upon the circumstances of going down, yet a fine sunset is a glorious object of contemplation, and an appropriate finish to a bright day. Let us therefore, for the encouragement of those who survive, pray that it may be said of us,

> "His God sustained him in his dying hour,
> His dying hour brought glory to his God."

II. We shall now contemplate the apostle turning from the retrospect of his past life, and anticipating the

enjoyment of those bright visions of immortal glory, which were rising before the eye of his faith, and forming his future prospect. "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord the righteous Judge shall give to me, and not to me only, but also unto all those who love his appearing."

In this whole passage the word "death" does not occur. The sacred writers of the New Testament wrote little of the grave. It is lost to their view in the blaze of heavenly glory, which appears beyond it. The apostle was now indulging the hope of some great and illustrious reward, sustaining and animating his spirit with the assurance of some great felicity in reserve for him. By the word "henceforth" he means that all that now remained for him, when his labour was finished, which it soon would, was to go and enjoy his rest.

We notice first of all in what terms he described the object of his hope: "a crown of righteousness." Does he allude to the diadem of monarchs? If so, he intends that, as there is nothing more grand or august, nothing more anxiously coveted, or more eagerly sought after by human ambition, than a crown, which is the summit of all earthly glory, so the honour and happiness of heaven surpass all other kinds of bliss, and are the supreme enjoyment of an immortal soul. The saints will enjoy royal state in heaven. Even now they are "kings and priests unto God," and hereafter they shall sit down with Christ on his throne, and wear the crown which he has prepared for them. But in all probability, the apostle alludes to the crowns which were awarded to the conquerors in the Grecian games. This suits the previous language, where he speaks of "finishing his course." The prize in the Isthmian games celebrated

near Corinth, and which of all the Greek cities engaged most of the apostle's notice, consisted only of a wreath of parsley. Hence we read in classic authors of persons being honoured with "Corinthian parslies," or "parsley crowns." There was no intrinsic value in the prize itself. But then of what distinguished renown was it the symbol? The conqueror received the commendation of the judges, and the applause of the multitude. He was borne home to his native city in a triumphal chariot. The walls were broken down that he might have a passage of his own. He was welcomed with the highest honour the state could confer. His name was inserted in the archives of his city, and he obtained a place in the page of its history, and a niche in its temple of fame. To this the apostle refers when he says, "They do it to obtain a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible one." Theirs was perishable in its nature. Its vegetable substance soon withered. No care could preserve it from decay. Perishable also was the renown it brought with it. The names of the men that received the Isthmian garlands, and the history that recorded them, have perished alike. But we contend for an incorruptible crown. An infinitely higher honour awaits the victor in the christian race, an honour to be conferred by our Lord Jesus Christ, in the presence of assembled worlds; which consists of a welcome to his eternal glory, an association with the innumerable company of angels and the spirits of just men made perfect, and a holy meetness, by perfect sanctity, to enjoy the inheritance of the saints in light.

In some places this honour and bliss are called a "crown of glory." "When the chief Shepherd shall appear ye shall receive a crown of glory, that fadeth not

away." How beautiful is the language of the holy Leighton on this passage. "It is a crown of glory, pure unmixed glory, without any admixture of pride, or sinful vanity, or any danger of it; and a crown that fadeth not, formed of such flowers as wither not; not a temporary garland of faded flowers as all are here, though made of flowers growing in a rich valley, their glorious beauty is fading; but this is in fresh and perfect lustre to all eternity. May they not well trample upon base gain and vain applause, that have this crown to look to! Joys of royal pomp how soon do they vanish as a dream? But this day begins a triumph and a feast that shall never either end or be wearied of. All things here, even the choicest flowers, cloy but satisfy not. Those above shall always satisfy but never cloy. What is to be refused in the way of this crown? All labour for it is sweet. And what is there here to be desired to stay our hearts, that we should not most willingly let go, to rest from our labours and receive our crown? Was ever any man sad that the day of his coronation drew nigh? In that day when he, on 'whose head are many crowns,' shall bestow many crowns, there will be no envies, no jealousies; all kings, each having his own crown, and each rejoicing in the glory of another, and all in HIS, who, on that day shall be 'all in all.'"

The apostle speaks of his coming honour, as a "crown of righteousness." Not, I apprehend, because it is obtained through the righteousness of Christ; though that indeed is true. Nor because it is a perfectly holy state to which it appertains; though that also is delightfully true. Much less did he mean to affirm he had obtained it, and deserved it, on the ground of merit; but, because it is righteously bestowed. "If a man strive for the

mastery," said Paul, in allusion to the Grecian games, "he is not crowned except he strive lawfully." The conqueror must have been found upon examination to have complied with the rules of the contest. If he had used any illicit method to obtain the prize, yet, after the award, though it had been bestowed upon him, it would have been taken away, and while he was disgraced, the next to him who reached the goal, would have received the prize. Such strict justice was observed, that the very garlands were called "crowns wreathed or platted by justice." In direct reference to this, the reward of the saints at the last day, is called "a crown of righteousness." It is what they shall come to in a prescribed, and therefore a legal, way. It is not bestowed for the righteousness of those who obtain it, but it comes in consequence of it. They who repent of sin, believe in Christ, and lead a holy life, are the individuals who shall attain to this honour and renown. They are the persons to whom it is promised, for whom it is prepared, and to whom it shall be presented.

It is as sure as it is glorious, "It is laid up." Crowns are usually deposited in places of great strength and safety, and withal well watched and guarded. The regalia of our monarch are lodged in the Tower of London. Strong as that place is, and well defended, the crown once was near being stolen and carried off; and crowns in earlier times have disappeared in civil war. But what power can obtrude, or what craft can insinuate, itself into the place where the saints' immortal diadems are kept? How beautifully is this expressed by the apostle, when he says, "An inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the

power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time." Here it is said that believers are kept for heaven, and heaven reserved for them. Thus their happiness is doubly secured.

This crown is to be bestowed "at that day." It is Paul's manner to allude in this form to the day of judgment. "I know," said he on another occasion, "whom I have believed, and am persuaded he is able to keep that which I have committed to him until that day." It is the day of days: the day for which all other days were made, and to which they are all tending. To that day of doom and destiny the apostle looked forward, as the time when he should receive his complete felicity, and till which it would not be complete. He expected that when he left our world he should enter upon his eternal happiness. "He desired to depart and to be with Christ." He spake of being "absent from the body and present with the Lord;" expressions which, in their natural import, must intend that he looked for an immediate entrance, after death, upon his heavenly bliss. Yet there can be no question that the New Testament writers more generally and frequently, refer to the second advent of Christ and the judgment day, as the object of the Christian's hope, and the consummation of his bliss, than to the entrance of the soul into heaven at death. The resurrection morning, when "death shall be swallowed up in victory," and the bodies of believers "be delivered from the bondage of corruption," is the coronation day. And it is not only probable, but certain, that the hopes of the bulk of real Christians are too limited; instead of going on to the coming of Christ, they stop at the introduction of the soul into the unseen world. It was not only his happiness immediately after

death, but his complete felicity at the last day, that engaged the attention and supplied the consolation of the apostle. At death his spirit was to go privately to the presence of his Lord, at the last day, he was to be solemnly and publicly crowned.

And who was to bestow the crown at that day? "The Lord the righteous Judge." We point out one more allusion, which is to be found in this language, to the national solemnities of Greece. The judges of the contest were appointed by public authority. In early history only one was selected, but the number was afterwards increased. The greatest care was taken that those who were entrusted with the office, should be men of the greatest integrity, who would pass a righteous sentence, and bestow the prize on him to whom it rightly belonged. A wrong award was cancelled by an appeal to a higher court of judicature, and the judges, if they had acted corruptly, were severely mulcted. The decree of the judges was called by classic authors "a pure sentence." It is in reference to this that Paul calls our Lord Jesus "the righteous Judge." He is to preside over the solemnities of the last judgment. "The Father judgeth no man, but has committed all judgment to the Son." "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in the body according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." In this office, though performed as mediator, He must of necessity possess the attributes of Divinity. He must be omniscient to know all hearts; omnipotent to raise the dead, to summons the universe to his bar, and to execute the sentence of life and death upon the countless millions of immortals, who will then have their destiny fixed by him. He is expressly called "Jesus

Christ the righteous." He will execute the strictest justice in fixing the destiny of every one on that day; giving to all the individuals of the innumerable host the exact degree of punishment and reward that their characters, tried by the standard of His word, may require. There will be neither mistake nor injustice in the sentences of that day. The apostle felt safe in His hands, and so may we. He knew that the judge of all the earth must and would do what was right; and he was at ease in this persuasion. And how it would enhance in his estimation the value of the crown, to receive it from the hands of Christ: from one so just, so glorious, and so good. Circumstances increase the value of gifts. How much more precious is that which is bestowed by a friend, than that given by a stranger? What an additional worth it gives to an article, that it was presented to us by a person of high rank and great renown. Who would not esteem a trifle from the Queen of these realms, far more to be prized than something of ten times the cost from an ordinary individual? Think then of a crown bestowed by a Divine friend, and that friend the Lord Jesus Christ, the King of kings and Lord of lords; the Saviour of our souls! What a gift and what a giver! O to have Christ say before assembled worlds, "Well done, good and faithful servant." Not only to be conscious of acceptance with him, as happily some are now, but to hear it judicially declared with publicity and solemnity. How joyful a sound will it be to hear such words from such lips, on such an occasion. What can be more grateful to the heart of a good man than that the glorious Lord of heaven and earth should say to him, "Well done." To have Him say as he did to Moses, "Thou hast found

grace in my sight." To have gained the testimony borne to holy Enoch that he "pleased God!" To have attained to this, is to be entitled to the salutation of the angel to the mother of Jesus, though on a different account, "Hail, thou art favoured of the Lord." Thus heaven will be the sweeter, because obtained and bestowed by Christ, and is to be ever enjoyed with him; we are to enter into the joy of our Lord, and have one felicity common to us and him.

The apostle's joy in the contemplation of eternal glory ended not with himself. He had uttered a burst of triumphant hope concerning his own eternal happiness: "There is laid up for me a crown of righteousness:" lest, however, it should be thought he was arrogantly monopolising to himself the honour to be bestowed by his Divine Master, or was selfishly indifferent to the happiness of others; and at the same time to magnify the grace of Christ, to indulge his own benevolent feelings, and to augment in his own estimation the felicity that awaited him, by the consideration of the persons who would share it with him, he adds, "and not to me only, but also unto all those that love his appearing." What a description he has given by one incidental stroke of his pen of the character of true Christians: "They love the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ." To some "that day" will be a dreadful one, that shall burn as an oven, and consume the wicked, root and branch. Even the distant contemplation of it is a source of terror which makes them endeavour to forget it. And what will its coming be? At the sign of the Son of Man all the tribes of the earth shall mourn, and they who have not fled to him as a Saviour, shall endeavour to flee from him as a Judge, calling "to the rocks to

fall on them and the hills to cover them, from him that sitteth upon the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb." On the contrary, to the true believer, "the glorious appearing of the Great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ, is his blessed hope." He is waiting, watching, preparing, and praying for this illustrious manifestation. He longs for that event, for then he shall see him whom now unseen he loves, in all his beauty, glory, and transcendent excellence. "He shall see him as he is, be with him and like him." Then he shall see the finishing of his Redeemer's work, in the completeness of his church in its members, holiness, and happiness; then he shall see the Divine government vindicated from all objections, and cleared from all mysteries; then he shall have his own happiness complete, as will be the happiness of all the chosen family of God. To him, therefore, the appearing of Christ is now the object of his complacency, and will be then the consummation of his hopes. On all those whose hearts are thus drawn to Christ now, and his advent hereafter, a crown will be bestowed. In the ancient games all the competitors ran, but only one received the prize. The rest may have been only a moment or a step behind the winner, may have been all but equal to him, may have been almost as much entitled to the prize as he was; but they gained nothing, and lost all. Their self-denial in training, their ardent aspirations, their eager anticipations, their excessive exertions, all were in vain, all ended in defeat and mortification. How painful was this; even the victor must have felt the pleasure of his gain in some measure diminished by a sight and sense of their disappointment. No such disappointment will accrue to us. Every competitor in the Christian race

who is tried and endures temptation; every one who is faithful unto death; every one who endures to the end, whatever may be his gifts and graces, though far inferior to those of many others, shall win the crown. All will receive a crown, though the crowns will not be all of equal value.

Did time permit, how many inferences might be deduced from this passage. In what a glorious aspect does it present to us our common Christianity, as settling the momentous question of a future state, and disclosing the unseen world to the view of the dying Christian. How sublimely is it said of Christ, "Who hath abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light by the gospel." This has reference both to the starless night of Paganism, and the dim twilight of Judaism. With what doubt and dismay did the wisest of the heathen, with one or two exceptions, look forward to death and the dark unknown beyond the grave? And even the best and holiest of the Jews appear to have had none of the triumphant hope and joyful anticipation which are characteristic of the Christian dispensation. How deep were the shades which to their eye invested the sepulchre. How powerfully does the language of despondency uttered by David and Hezekiah, and the gloomy pictures which they frequently drew of the regions beyond the grave, natural to such as were "all their life time subject to bondage through fear of death," contrast with the triumphant confidence and bright visions of immortal glory, which appeared to Paul, Peter, and John. How are we to account for this, but on the ground of the clearer revelation which was granted to them of the heavenly state? If Christianity ever appears to greater advantage at one time than another, it is when it erects

its trophies on the tomb, and inspires men with living hopes in dying moments. What has the poor infidel to look to in his latter end? the grave, and nothing else. His exclamation is, "Let us eat, and drink, for to-morrow we die." In his last moments, when ending the perilous and fruitless voyage of life, he sees nothing before him but the dark and frowning rocks of annihilation. How loud the tempest howls! how terribly the billows roar! To his exploring eye no beacon light holds out its guidance to the haven of peace. In a moment, to his expectation, he may dash upon the fearful cliff, and be lost for ever. Poor wretch! And is it for this thou hast forsaken the revelation of heavenly glory? But how many have had the hardihood to live infidels, who have not had the hardihood to die such? It is a strong testimony to the truth and excellence of Christianity, that while no one was ever known to abandon it and turn infidel upon a death bed, multitudes have abandoned infidelity and turned Christians there.

And does not the experience of the apostle prove the connection between a holy and useful life, and a peaceful death and hope of glory? The apostle connects them not only in this place, but in another; where he says, "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." There are, I know, peaceful deaths after wicked lives: in such cases, fearfully delusive ones; yet in others we would not limit the Holy One of Israel, and say that repentance is never granted to dying sinners; but we will affirm, that though true repentance is never too late, late repentance is rarely true. And even where it is true, it is, or ought to be, more characterised by the profoundest humility, contrition, and self-abhorrence, than by ecstatic raptures; or at any rate there ought to

be as much of broken heartedness as there is of strong faith and confident hope. Let us then all look forward to the closing scenes of life, and seriously consider the review we shall then take of our course. It will be well often to anticipate that time, and the opening scenes of eternity; and ask ourselves what kind of retrospect and prospects we would then wish to have: what, living as we now are, we are likely to have.

MEMOIR.

My dear brother and your late pastor was born at Salisbury. His parents belonged to the Church of England, in the doctrines and rites of which he was educated. His conversion to God took place in some measure through the influence of a brother. He was at the time engaged as clerk in an attorney's office. On this great change, he joined in communion with a church of Independents, under the pastoral care of the Rev. Mr. Adams. Soon after his religious character became settled, he was encouraged by his pastor to exhort and preach in the surrounding villages. This led to an earnest desire to separate himself from worldly business, and to give himself wholly to the work of the Christian ministry. As he gave proof of strong mental powers, he was sanctioned in his determination by Mr. Adams, and entered as a student at Hoxton College, London, then under the presidency of the Rev. R. Simpson. There he remained about three years, and acquired considerable distinction as a popular and impressive preacher. Having completed his studies, his first ministerial labours were carried on at Tisbury, in Wiltshire, (the birth-place of the venerable William Jay), where his

services were much valued by the congregation, who would gladly have retained him among them. He then supplied for about three months the pulpit at Poole, which had become vacant by the death of the late Mr. Ashburner, and which was subsequently occupied by that excellent and lovely minister, Mr. Durant. His labours there were so acceptable, so popular, and so impressive, that if the congregation had not already entered into something like an engagement with Mr. Durant (though they had not then heard him), they would certainly have chosen Mr. Keynes for their pastor. At that time I was myself a youth, living at Poole, and had but very recently come under the influence of religion; and his sermons deepened considerably the impressions which, by other means, had been already produced upon my mind. I have at this distance of more than half a century, a very vivid recollection not only of his manner and tones, but even of some of his expressions. I owe something therefore to his memory and service, for he helped me much at that crisis of the religious history, when we are most powerfully susceptible of good or bad influences.

The vicinity of Poole to this town, made the congregation here intimately acquainted with Mr. Keynes's popularity; and after preaching to them for a short time, he received and accepted an invitation to become co-pastor with the venerable Henry Field. I cannot of course refer to that holy and blameless man, and dwell upon the events which I am now relating, without deep emotion; associated as they are with all my own early history. Here in this town I was born; here were the scenes of my childhood and youth. To this place of

worship I was brought as a child by my parents, who worshipped God on this spot, and whose remains now repose in the adjoining cemetery. I can recollect scenes and emotions associated with this place between sixty and seventy years ago. I have reminiscences of all the assistant ministers that were associated with Mr. Field; Morrell, Frost, Gurteen, and Golding, and of all the circumstances connected with their settlement and removal. Before my imagination rise up at this moment the shades of the excellent men; (their names are still precious, and their memory is still fragrant,) who at that time made this one of the most respectable country congregations I ever knew: and in reference to whom I now pensively say, "Your fathers where are they, and the prophets do they live for ever?" To them in connection with his aged colleague, Mr. Keynes ministered with great and growing acceptance. His ordination took place on September 9th, 1802. I was present on the occasion, and remember well the services of that solemn day. Of all the ministers who took part in those solemnities, one only survives, I mean the Rev. Dr. Bennett, then of Romsey, now of London.

Soon after this, Mr. Keynes entered into connection with my family, by marrying my eldest sister: an union which was a source of happiness to themselves, and of satisfaction to the congregation. He now commenced, what must in all cases be regretted in reference to Christian pastors, and what though once so common, is now happily rare, the connection of the profession of a schoolmaster with that of a minister. If a pastor finds it absolutely necessary for the support of his family to engage in any secular calling, nothing is so nearly related

to his own duties, as that of educating youth. It is in one sense allied to the work of the ministry. Yet it is, after all, an alien occupation and an impediment to it. It is in opposition to the precept, "Give thyself wholly to these things." Yet if there be no other means of obtaining adequate support, because a church is too small to furnish a competent salary, far better this, than for a minister to bring disgrace, by incurring debts which he cannot discharge. For the more effectual fulfilment of the functions of this office, I well remember the extraordinary diligence and labour Mr. Keynes manifested. He was most conscientiously anxious to be eminently fitted for the very important duty of training the minds of the young; a duty which he would not discharge in an imperfect manner, as many do, without proper qualifications, and merely for a livelihood. The office of a schoolmaster is next in importance and influence to that of a minister, and it is injustice to the rising generation, to their parents, and to the public, for any one to undertake it, without competent abilities and acquirements. As an instructor of youth he was very successful, and many are now filling highly respectable stations in life who were educated by him. One of the first mathematicians of the age and a professor in the London University, was among his pupils, and cherishes to this day a grateful recollection of the benefits which he derived from his tuition.*

* Mr Keynes published a Tract on his system of teaching languages. One principle was teaching words by pictures, with explanatory descriptions in the language to be acquired, and the other was an adaptation of Lancaster's plan, and made each boy, as he had mastered the parsing and construing of a lesson, teach it to another, until the whole class became perfect in it. The former plan

In this co-pastorate with Mr. Field, my dear brother was singularly and uninterruptedly happy. There is a prejudice in the minds of some aged ministers against a joint charge; and it must be confessed, that the many cases in which it has proved a source of uneasiness not only to both parties, but also to the church, afford some ground for this objection. There have been instances, however, in which, through the amiable disposition of the aged pastor, and the kind, considerate, and deferential conduct of the younger one, the most entire and unbroken harmony has been preserved for a long series of years. An aged minister should be prepared to say in reference to the younger one, "He must increase, but I must decrease;" the younger should most affectionately and assiduously endeavour to sustain the declining powers and fading charms of the old one, while at the same time the congregation, amidst all their growing attachment to the vigour and beauty of youthful talent, should not omit the gratitude, the respect, and veneration that are due to the aged man,

was (according to the Editor's experience, during several months) much better than the vocabulary work which boys were then afflicted with; and was an anticipation of the present method of illustrated educational books. The latter was a delusion. An incident of Mr. Keyne's life will show the man. One day, two young gentlemen rode up to his school-room door, and, without dismounting, sent for him out, and then, in the hearing of his boys, made insulting enquiries respecting the details of his establishment, under the pretence of recommending some young man of title to place himself there, to prepare for a university. As they persisted in their annoyance, after warning, Mr Keynes ordered his man to pull the chief spokesman from his horse and cane him: and this was done. To the honour of all parties, it should be added, that the next morning the young gentleman was brought by his father to Mr. Keynes' school, and there, in the presence of his boys, asked his pardon. Ed.

who has worn out his life and collected his grey hairs in their service. All this was happily exemplified in the two ministers who for so many years occupied this pulpit.*

The life of the pastor of a church in a small town, affords few incidents which demand attention. Mr Keynes was too much occupied with home duties to be in any sense a public man, though under other circumstances, he possessed talents, which might thus have been employed with considerable advantage. The gale of applause with which he commenced at Poole, would, if he had commanded leisure, have borne him onward on the tide of great popularity. His services were highly esteemed by the neighbouring congregations, to whose pulpits he was always welcome. He certainly was never much of a pastor, a matter often lamented by his flock. This was in part the result of his natural disposition, and in part of his occupations, formerly as a schoolmaster, and more latterly as engaged in agricultural pursuits. He never, however, neglected preparing for his pulpit. His sermons were usually well studied, and not the effusions of crude and hasty thought, the product of such scraps of time, as his other occupations left him. He was an early riser, and secured for their composition as much time before he entered on his secular

* This was also pre-eminently the case with the Author and his co-pastor, Mr. Dale, owing to the almost unexampled single-mindedness and amiability of both. The Author's second wife entertained so lively an apprehension that he could not endure to see his people's affection shared by a younger colleague, that she besought the Editor, in case of her removal, to use all his influence to induce his father to resign rather than incur the risk. The Editor shared her anxieties, but he lived to see the grace and providence of God sufficient for his father in this as in all other respects.

occupations, as some men do, who have the whole day at command. It must be admitted that had he not felt the necessity of engaging in scholastic pursuits, his preaching would have been still more excellent, and have risen to a high order. His strong clear voice, his powerful imagination, and his masculine understanding, must have made him, had he been left to the leisure and habits of a sermoniser, a very popular preacher and platform speaker.

Upon the whole, with the exception of one or two attacks of illness, he enjoyed through life good health, and continued his labours with little interruption till the last. His constitution was perceived by his family so long ago as last winter, to be in some slight degree losing its usual tone: but in April the disease which brought him to the grave, shewed itself by unmistakeable symptoms, and from that time continued steadily and irresistibly to advance, in spite of skilful and devoted attention. As it approached its termination, it threw occasionally a cloud over his strong intellect, and for weeks rendered its exercise disturbed and incoherent. It was not permitted his family to enjoy the privilege of witnessing in his case, the cloudless sunset of a calm and beautiful summer evening. Delirium, often distressing, prevented this: and in this respect, and in this only, he had a dark and rough access to the gate of life. So long as his physical frame admitted the unimpeded exercise of his reason, he viewed his approaching death, if not with the exultation of triumphant hope, yet with the undismayed expectation of a peaceful faith. Grace works no miracles for the most distinguished of God's servants, in counteracting the effects of disease on the cerebral functions; and even the children of light, like

the children of this world, sometimes pass with gloomy hallucinations through the dark valley of the shadow of death. Thus many have been prevented in the last scene of the conflict, from bearing their dying testimony either to the hope that was in them, or to those great truths which had proved the basis of it. This, however gratifying to their friends, was not needed to prove the sincerity of their profession, or the safety of their state. The testimony of a holy life is a still more veritable and impressive one than even that of a happy death: and though when the intellect retains its power unclouded by disease, the one generally leads to the other, yet where, as in the present case, the feebleness and decay of the body extend to the mind, the usefulness and splendour of the orb during its course, must be accepted in lieu of a brilliant setting. In the early stages of your minister's disease his trust in the merits of the Saviour for eternal life was unshaken, and his hope of immortal glory peaceful, if not triumphant. My last interview with him was in May, when he had heard from his medical attendant, and felt in himself, the sentence of death, and rarely have I conversed with any one, who spoke of his decease more unreservedly, or more calmly. I felt there was no need in order to his comfort, to avoid the subject altogether, or to advert to it only by oblique hints, or half uttered insinuations. We spoke of his decease as a thing settled, and he did it with more than the tranquillity of a philosopher, with the hope of a Christian. I have thus enlarged upon the subject because I believe the secrets of his dying chamber have transpired, and had by some been misinterpreted into mental despondency and spiritual gloom. It is my firm conviction that the joys of

some even in their deaths, are, as illusive in themselves, and as deceptive to survivors, as are the physical painful apprehensions of others. Medical science will attest that, even where there is no delirium, some diseases tend to excitement and exhilaration, while others produce gloom and despondency.

It will not be expected, I hope, that I should attempt an extended delineation of the character of your departed pastor. I am not over fond of these post mortem examinations, and pulpit dissections, of the character of the departed ministers and members of our churches. In too many cases funeral panegyrics are nothing better, or more, than the incense of flattery burnt by the hand of affection at the shrine of friendship. What our friends have been is always better known than we can describe. My dear brother has not after more than fifty-one years' residence among you, left it to be disclosed to you by any biographer what he really was. His character was no problem for me now to solve in the pulpit where, and to the people among whom, for more than half a century, he preached the gospel of our salvation. His strong intelligence and masculine understanding, his inflexible integrity and uprightness, his noble generosity and abhorrence of all that was mean, sordid, and selfish, his unwearied industry and diligence, in short, all that side of his character as a man, which was turned toward his fellow men, is well known to you. "He walked in wisdom towards them that are without, and let his light so shine before men, that they seeing his good works glorified God his heavenly Father." His congregation never had the mortification of being taunted with the inconsistent conduct of their minister, nor reproached with his debts, which they were called

upon to discharge. Like his venerable predecessor, he walked the streets of this town without having the finger of scorn pointed at him as one, who whatever he might be in the pulpit, out of it, soiled the cloth he wore, and dishonoured the office he filled. He has gone to his grave without the shadow of a shade of imputation having passed over the surface of his reputation, and without the fly-blown taint of calumny having been insinuated into its substance. And is ministerial consistency of so little value, or is ministerial delinquency of such rare occurrence, that more than half a century's following "the whatsoever things are true, and honest, and just, and pure, and lovely, and of good report," is no cause for congratulation, and no subject of thanksgiving on behalf of our dear friend?

The public testimony to his character, not only by his own friends and congregation, but by the townspeople generally, among whom he has so long dwelt, and by whom he was so well known, first at the celebration of his jubilee, and then on the day of his obsequies,* is a proof of the esteem in which he was held. He was no busy body in other men's matters, no sower of discord, no turbulent meddler, no restless agitator of the public peace. There are seasons and occasions when it is not only felt, but confessed, that Christian excellence, though it may be found as to its home in one particular denomination, belongs in fact to the holy universal church; when around the grave of a departed saint we drop our sectarianism, and take up our charity, and feel that we are all one in Christ, and that in the removal of so eminent a Christian, we have sustained a common

* The shops of the town were closed, and the minute bell was tolled by order of the Rector and the Churchwardens.

loss. Expressions of respectful sympathy from not only members, but clergy, of the Church of England, have not been wanting in the present case: and no wonder, for our departed brother though a firm and consistent, was not a bigoted or waspish nonconformist: he was a lover of all good men, and sought after the things that make for peace.

As a theologian, Mr. Keynes was an admirer of the writings, because a believer in the sentiments, of our great Puritan and nonconformist divines. He was no follower of the new lights that have been kindling around us, and which with meteoric flutter and delusiveness are beguiling, I fear, some of the younger ministers of the present day into the gulf of error. The ancient gospel, which though old is always new, was his theme. Yet he possessed a bold, independent, and rather speculative turn of mind. He knew that Christ crucified was his appointed and appropriate theme, and he kept to it, and yielded no more than did Paul, to the clamorous demands of a philosophising age, and an Athenian passion for some new thing. An abstract, cold, and heartless intellectuality he knew was another gospel, and yet not another, and he would not preach it. What the world needs is, the old truths set forth with new power. God in his mercy forbid, that our churches should ever tolerate any other men in their pulpits, than such as, like the great apostle of the Gentiles, glory only in the cross of Christ; or should think more of the talent of the preacher and of the sermon, than the doctrine which the preacher holds, and the sermon teaches. I do not depreciate talent, nor make light of genius: I hold that the gospel is a theme suited to the noblest powers of the noblest minds: but it is more than probable that

in the present day there is danger, especially among our young members, of setting talent above truth and piety; or at any rate, of being more ardent in the worship which they conduct around the shrine of genius, than in the sacrifice they offer on the altar of faith. The first, and most emphatic, and indeed almost only expression we hear from their lips when they are seeking after a minister, is, "We must now have a man of talent."

As a Christian man (and what minister is he whose Christianity does not include a practical and vital Christianity?) my dear brother has of late years, to my own judgment at least, been acquiring additional degrees of spiritual excellence. I do not think that originally he was what is denominated good-tempered; but he had by grace subdued his natural disposition. Generous, affectionate, and kind, he always was; but in my earlier intercourse with him I thought him somewhat dogmatical and litigious, fond of disputation, and not only pointing his arguments with logic, but barbing, and sometimes poisoning, them with severe irony and stinging sarcasm. During the decline of his life I have seen that the gentle and passive virtues, which are, after all, the most christian ones, were in him brought out into bolder relief, and the meekness and gentleness of Christ were more beautifully imitated. The fruits of the Spirit have appeared in him in all their autumnal richness and ripeness.

My brother has had his trials. If Luther said three things make a minister, study, prayer, and afflictions, your pastor wanted not the influence of the latter: but I believe he knew how to turn his sorrows to a good account. Yet he sometimes, perhaps, suffered little

annoyances experienced in his church (of which he had very few) to affect him more than they need to have done. It would be quite needless to dwell on his conduct in the domestic relations of life. What he was as a husband she could testify, were she permitted to speak from the skies, whom now he has joined in eternity. What as a father, his numerous family know, in whose hearts their parents will have a monument which filial affection will delight to honour. For them his midnight hours and mid-day labours were employed, as far as was consistent with the claims of his church and congregation.

On the review of life, no man was more sensible of defects, both as a Christian and a minister, than he was. The most profound humility characterised his frame of mind: and such was his deep sense of deficiency, that sometimes, even when his mind was not under the power of delirium, he deprived himself of the full consolations which are provided, by the mercy of God, in the gospel scheme of salvation, for all those who can trust in that blood which cleanseth from all sin.

He has now reached that blessed world which is ever drawing to itself all that is holy on earth, upon whose deathless and eternal shores the tide of time is ever setting and conveying the souls of the redeemed family, where "mortality will be swallowed up of life." The spirits of just men made perfect, and the innumerable company of the angels, have received him to their exalted and blessed fellowship. God, the judge of all, has welcomed him to his presence; and Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant, has said, "Well done, good and faithful servant."

No widow remains to mourn his loss, for she who

would have been such had she survived him, preceded him to glory. May his children, whether settled in this country or in lands afar off,* be thankful that they had a father at whose name they will never have cause to blush, and may their father's God be theirs; then, when the dispersion ever going on in this world is over, they will meet him at the gathering together of the saints unto Christ, in that world where there is no more sea or separation, and no more death.

To his church and congregation I would say, be thankful you had him, and had him so long. Dear brethren, confide in Christ for the future. The history of this church has, in one particular, been almost, if not quite, unexampled. For the first time for a century and a half certainly, perhaps for a longer time, it has not till now been destitute of a minister.† At the decease of Mr. Blake, who had been pastor for fifty years, there was Mr. Field, his assistant, still remaining. At the decease of Mr. Field, there was his co-pastor, whom you have just lost; so that your church has been unusually blessed in being exempt from those perils which ever attend the filling up of a vacancy in the pulpit. May you be kept in harmony and unbroken unity, and the future history of this church be as peaceful and happy as the past has been. For this let all seek in the spirit of love, and all pray in the spirit of faith. Prepare to meet your pastor at the bar of God, when you will hear him

* Three of his sons are in Australia [and two others have since joined them. Ed.]

† The church at Blandford is one of the oldest in the country, and was formed in all probability during the Commonwealth, or soon after. And it is remarkable, that during two centuries, it had only four pastorates. Mr. Field was minister there sixty-six years.

say, "I take you to record, I am clear from the blood of all, for I have not shunned to declare unto you the whole counsel of God." Fearful will it then be to have him appear as a swift witness against you. Fearful will it be to have the consciousness that his ministry was only a savour of death unto death. Fearful will it be to hear from the lips of Christ the doom of the unprofited hearer. Fearful will it be to pass to the world of retribution, and spend eternity in suffering the punishment of a misimproved ministry. On the contrary, may you be among those, and many such there will be, who will be his crown of rejoicing in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ.

THE CONSOLATION AND DUTY OF CHURCHES UNDER THE LOSS OF EMINENT MINISTERS.

A FUNERAL SERMON,

OCCASIONED BY THE

DEATH OF THE REV. WILLIAM JAY,

PREACHED IN THE VINEYARDS CHAPEL, BATH,

ON THURSDAY, JANUARY 5, 1854.

I NEED not say what event has convened this large, solemn, and mournful assembly. "A great man and a prince has fallen in Israel." The tidings have gone out through not only this city, but the kingdom, and to the world, that at length the venerable William Jay, the ministerial patriarch of his own denomination, the praise of every other; for sixty-three years the pastor of the church in Argyle Chapel; and one of the brightest ornaments, as well as oldest inhabitants, of this city, has finished his course, and entered into rest; and we are here to bow to the will of God in his removal, to pay a public tribute of respect to his precious memory, and to learn those lessons of wisdom and piety which the event is calculated and designed to teach. The passage I have selected, as the subject of discourse, is

2 KINGS ii, 14.

"Where is the Lord God of Elijah?"

There was a sublime grandeur, an unearthly greatness, in the character of Elijah, compared with which the pomp of kings, the dignity of philosophers, and the renown of heroes, fade into darkness, and dwindle into insignificance. They were all of the earth, earthly. But under the rough garment, and somewhat repulsive exterior, of that uncourtly man, was concealed a prophet of the Lord of Hosts, an ambassador of the King of kings,

whose credentials were an authority over the powers of nature, the ability to open and shut heaven. He was the minister of God to a wicked nation, and a still more wicked court; to both of which he came as a reformer, to restore the law and covenant of God, which they had so shamefully violated. His stupendous miracles were inflictions of divine justice, and thus characteristic of the dispensation under which he lived and laboured. His contest with the priests of Baal, which sustained the controversy between the claims of Jehovah and those of idolatry, is one of those awful scenes which are peculiar to the province of divine revelation, and to which the facts of secular history yield nothing parallel, nothing analagous. "It is a piece of sacred narrative so wonderful in itself, and so surrounded with wonders, that it resembles a volcanic tract, where the marks of a stupendous agency are visible on every hand."

Before the close of his extraordinary career, Elijah was assisted and blessed in his sacred calling by an associate every way worthy of himself. When the time of his departure arrived, his exit was not by the beaten road along "the valley of the shadow of death," but by the secluded path where the footsteps of only one solitary traveller were to be found. The "King of Terrors," in his case, was robbed of his prey. In a chariot of fire he ascended to the skies. This was intended as a testimony, to an ungodly age, of the divine regard for true piety in the character of God's servant; a rebuke to the people for their wickedness; and an unmistakeable intimation of a future state of happiness and glory, both for the bodies and souls of the righteous. Elisha was the witness (the only one, as far as we know,)

of this wondrous scene, which, as it passed before his astonished vision, extorted the exclamation expressive of his grief and surprise, and his sense of his own deprivation, "My father, my father! the chariots of Israel and the horsemen thereof." The mantle which had been worn in life by the prophet, dropped from around him as he stepped into the flaming vehicle, fell to the earth, and was found by his successor, who, on taking it up, immediately proceeded in faith, to prove whether he might expect a manifestation of that same divine power which had been granted to its former illustrious owner; and with it he smote the waters of Jordan, saying, at the same time, "Where is the Lord God of Elijah?" The meaning of this cannot be mistaken: "Alas! the great prophet is gone. The defences of Israel are broken down. But his God still lives. Let the God of Elijah still be with Elisha, and then even this great loss will be repaired."

In selecting this portion of holy scripture for the present mournful occasion, I do not, of course, intend to establish any comparison, much less parallel, between our departed friend and Elijah. The stern but noble Jew, the fiery reformer, the terrible minister of divine justice, was not the type of that gentle, loving servant of Christ, that polished vessel of mercy, who has lately passed away from us to his eternal rest. It is the deprivation of the ministry of Elijah, and the view taken of it by his successor, on which I intend to dwell; and in pursuance of this design, I remark.

The decease of eminent ministers of the gospel is a great loss which must be felt, and ought to be acknowledged.

No man is immortal upon earth. The most holy and

distinguished must die, as well as the wicked and worthless. The lamps in the sanctuary, as well as "the candle of the Lord" in our dwellings, must be extinguished. Of the brightest of them all it must be said he *was* "a burning and a shining light." No brilliancy of genius, no sanctity of life, no extent of usefulness, can obtain for its possessor an exemption from the stroke of mortality. Heaven is continually enriching itself with the spoils of the pulpit, as well as of the pew. Even the departure of the meanest saint is so much loss of the salt of the earth, and of the light of the world. What an accumulation of spiritual excellence is thus ever going on in that world which is drawing to itself all that is holy in this! If every Christian be a loss, how much more every minister, and especially every one whom divine grace has distinguished by eminent degrees of sanctified intellect, widely extended usefulness, and great influence! The decease of such a man is a loss to his own church, of the saintly example, the affectionate and sympathising friend, the wise counsellor, the faithful reprover, the instructive preacher, the watchful pastor, the centre of union, and the bond of communion to the whole society over which he presided. Nor is this all; a successor must be chosen, and sometimes this brings on a division, always the peril of it. And the loss, although it begins at the church of the deceased minister, stops not there, but affects the whole section of the great Christian community of which he was a member. He was one, perhaps, whose usefulness, as well as his praise, was in all the churches; who, in a limited sense, was their boast and glory; in whose life they all seemed to have a share, and in whose death they all sustain a calamity. Hundreds of churches utter their lamentations over the tomb of such a man;

and (when this is not carried too far, and allowed to degenerate into a dependence upon instruments, and a glory in man,) it is a just tribute to departed worth, and a testimony to excellence and usefulness as beneficial to the living as it is honourable to the dead. There are some men also, and they are the most eminent of all, whom the catholicity of their spirit, and the number of their works, and their bearing on the interests of piety at large, constitute the property of the universal church; ministers in whose useful and excellent talents every saint feels he has a vested interest. Their right hand lifts up the light of truth; their left holds out the olive branch of peace. While, with a prophet's firmness, they hold fast the wisdom that comes from above, which is first pure; their lives are spent in works of peace, to heal the wounds of the bleeding church. From the tombs of such men, bigotry retires abashed and confounded, while charity draws near with loving heart and reverent foot, to mourn and weep. The grave of holy love is the most sacred spot on earth, over which angels delight to hover, and upon which God looks down with interest.

But all this is only a small part of the loss occasioned by the death of eminent ministers of Christ. The world, as well as the church, suffers from their removal: "My father, my father! the chariots of Israel and the horsemen thereof," may be said in every such case. If in view of the higher and more enduring benefits conferred by the ministerial office, and if with heaven and eternity open before us, into which the moral and spiritual results of the faithful labours of Christian pastors are continually being poured, it were worth while to contend for lower benefits, I might claim for those who occupy the pulpit the respect and gratitude of the age, for what

they have done for every branch of literature and science, and for all the interests of our common humanity. The public preachers of religion help to refine the taste, improve the genius, educate the mind, civilize the manners, and in every way promote the mental improvement, of the nation. They prevent the dominion of vice, and maintain the prevalence of virtue and good morals; they uphold the authority of law and the stability of government, and while conducting men to glory, honour, and immortality, scatter from the pulpit the seeds of social order and human improvement. They advocate the claims of humanity to sympathy, relief, and comfort; and give a stimulus to all those efforts which are made to instruct the ignorant, to supply the necessitous, and to reform the vicious.

Still, we repeat, these are only the minor benefits of the ministerial office. Its chief blessing to a nation is, by the preaching of the cross, to save the lost and ruined immortals which form its population, to pluck them as brands from the eternal burning, and conduct them to the heaven of the eternal God. Of the multitudes that are saved, by far the greater part owe their eternal happiness to the labours of the faithful minister. If this be true, and none will doubt it, then what a loss has the world sustained by the death of only one such friend to its present and eternal interests as an eminent minister of Jesus Christ. It is not a poet, painter, or musician, who gratified their taste, and amused them with the creations of his genius; a philosopher who elevated their intellect by the speculations of his; or a statesman who legislated for their property; a patriot who fought for their liberty; a physician who ministered to their health, that is removed, (though

we do not undervalue the advantages conferred by such men upon society,) but it is a minister of Christ, a messenger of mercy, a herald of salvation, who sought and promoted their welfare for eternity. Looking at matters in this light as connected with eternity, and this is the light in which the subject is presented by the word of God, what is the death of Nelson, Wellington, Raffaelle, or Milton, to that of Whitefield, Wesley, Chalmers, Wardlaw, or Jay?

We do not underestimate, as we have said, the obligations which men of art, science, and imagination confer upon the community; we would not extinguish a ray of genius, nor wantonly destroy a single production of taste; but man is in this world on probation for eternity; immortality with all its tremendous scenes is before him; Jesus Christ has been on earth to perform His great redeeming work; and he, therefore, is his country's best friend while he lives, and its greatest loss when he dies, who is devoted to the sublime employment of conducting its population to imperishable wealth, unfading honours, and eternal bliss, beyond the grave; in doing this he, at the same time, most effectually promotes the order, the peace, the strength of the nation. And are not the prayers which he presents himself, and which he teaches and assists others to present, among the strongest defences of his country and the richest contributions to its prosperity and peace?

I now observe that, though the loss of eminent ministers is always felt, there sometimes are circumstances which cause their deaths to fall upon the church and the world with heavier weight than usual. At the time of Elijah's removal, the measure of Israel's iniquities was fast filling up, and the nation was ripening apace

for destruction. The sky was overcast with the clouds of its trangressions, and the horizon darkening and rumbling with the storm of divine indignation.

And, amidst the signs of the times which gladden our hearts and exalt our hopes, are there no portents on our sky which tend to depress us, and to alarm our fears? Under our bright sky are there no tremblings of the earth beneath our feet, which indicate an approaching earthquake? I refer not now to the political aspect of the times, the hostile attitude of nations, and the fearful presages of war. I do not take into account the warnings of the men who, from the watch towers of observation, are giving notes of alarm; nor the vaticinations of those who are busy in deciphering prophetic symbols and calculating prophetic times. My reference is to moral and spiritual phenomena. Can any man be ignorant of the revived power, the bold attitude, the constant aggressions, the successive victories, of Protestantism's old foe, "the man of sin, the son of perdition?" On the other hand, can any observer of the current of opinion be unacquainted with the alarming prevalence of infidelity in all its forms, and of heresy in all its grades? Is there not a scepticism infecting our very orthodoxy; a speculative and philosophical spirit insinuating itself into many of our young ministers, which looks as if not only the battle of the Reformation was to be fought over again, but all the great verities of religious truth which we had considered to be settled, were to be ever and anon tested and tried subjectively by some new process of transcendental reason? At such a time we must regard, as a calamity to the church, the departure of men, whose names, if they do not

exercise authority, and stop the progress of inquiry (which no human names ought to do), yet suggest caution, and tend to restrain the restlessness of speculation, and to resist the violence of innovation. There are iconoclasts of creeds as well as of idols, mistaking truth for error, who may be kept in check by some better able to discriminate amidst the light and experience of age than those who, in the ardour of youth, and in the dim twilight of their dawn, see things through the mists of passion.

But we may remark that there are, on the other hand, considerations which tend to mitigate the loss of eminent ministers. In some cases they are aged, and may be supposed to have nearly completed all the work that could be expected from them. This, probably, was the case with Elijah. We are sometimes called and distressed to witness a bright luminary, scarcely risen in splendour above the horizon, sinking down in cloud and shadow to be seen no more, leaving us to exclaim, "Alas! that hopes so bright should be soon followed with bitter disappointment!" The fall of an aged minister is so much more according to the course of nature, and so much more for his own comfort than to linger out existence in helpless infirmity, that we are prepared to acquiesce in such appointments. Who could wish to detain men on earth little capable of enjoying it, and to keep them from heaven for which they were so prepared? Some remain to be scarcely the monument, only the wreck of what they were. Thankful for all these aged servants did in the morning, noon, and earlier evening of their lives, we must not wish to keep them till they are wrapped in the dark shadows of night, when no more work can be done.

It reconciles us to the loss of such men when they retained their integrity to the last, and they departed not fuller of years than of honours. Elijah was a holy man to the hour of his removal. His mission had been an arduous one, carried on amidst great temptations; but he resisted the torrent of evil example, and at the peril of his life, was "faithful found among the faithless." Even he had his infirmities, but they were nothing more than specks upon a bright pure surface. His rare excellences secured him the honour of being one of the selected witnesses of the transfiguration of Christ. And is ministerial delinquency so rare in its occurrence, and so feeble and harmless in its influence, as that a bright example of consistent piety and blameless conduct, commenced in youth, maintained in manhood, and perpetuated to old age, shall be little thought of? Not all that infidels ever penned, whether of coarse ribaldry or subtle argument; not the opening of all the floodgates of impiety by the hand of immorality and profanity; not the song of the drunkard, nor the jest of the witling, can do half the mischief to our holy religion, which is inflicted by the vice, the sins, and even the minor inconsistencies of its ministers. While, on the other hand, such a character as that which we contemplate this day in our departed friend, is a volume of practical evidence in favour of Christianity. And it has this excellence, it is a volume which all who knew him can read without purchasing it, understand without mistaking it, and must admit the force of it without being able to confute it. On the other hand, useless, yea, mischievous, are those sermons against infidelity which are not sustained by a life that itself exemplifies Christianity.

Elijah was useful to the last moment of his life. The chariot of fire summoned him not from the couch of indolence, or the bed of weakness, but from the field of labour. There was no long period of uselessness elapsing before he was received to his rest and reward. Occasionally we are called to witness a devoted and useful labourer arrested in his active career before he has half finished his course: his sun goes down at noon behind clouds so dense that scarcely a glimpse comes out upon the world. "What a luminary!" many are ready to say, "is hidden behind that veil! Oh! that the curtain could be drawn aside, and that we might be permitted again to walk in its light!" On the contrary, how refreshing a spectacle is it to see the servant of God holding on his way amidst the years of old age without its infirmities; reviving, as by fresh draughts of the river of life, his youth, like the eagle's; adding the wisdom of age to the activities of youth, and the vigour of manhood,

> "'Till old experience doth attain
> To something of prophetic strain."

The noontide blaze of genius is gone, the fervour of imagination is somewhat cooled, the physical energy is somewhat abated; but it is only to give way to the softer effulgence, and the more pleasurable warmth of the evening sun. How solemnly impressive are the oracular sermons of an aged, holy, and able minister of Christ, to whose sage counsels young and old, with reverent attention, delight to listen! As a hoary head is "a crown of glory when found in the way of righteousness;" and as long life gives a man greater opportunity of usefulness, and is ever spoken of in Scrip-

ture as a blessing, it is not only lawful, but proper, to ask it by prayer, and to seek it by temperance and the care of health.

The loss of a minister is less felt when he leaves behind him, as his best substitute, some of the fruits and efforts of his labours in life. The prophet of Israel did this. Besides the schools of the prophets, which he so carefully superintended; besides the seeds of knowledge and piety which he had sown in the minds of the students; besides the remembrance of his own bright example, there was the mantle, which, to his successor, was to be the token and pledge of God's manifested power.

"Every son of man that plays a part in the great drama of life, leaves, at his departure, an impress and an influence more or less extensive and lasting. The grave of the peasant and the mausoleum of the prince are alike vocal. From every one of the dead a voice is heard, in some circle of the world's inhabitants, which the knell of their departure does not drown, which the earth and the green sod do not muffle, which neither deafness nor distance, nor any thing that men can devise, can extinguish. Every churchyard speaks often far more thrilling accents than the senate house or the congregation of the living. How true is this of the christian minister! When he has been gathered to his fathers, and the voice that sounded the trumpet of alarm and battle has been hushed in the silence of the tomb, O! there often comes from the pastor laid in the grave a more persuasive and melting eloquence than there came from the pastor standing in the pulpit; and from the herald of Jesus, wrapped in his winding sheet, a more successful sermon than from the herald of Jesus

robed in the emblems of his ministerial character! Deep, often, is the appeal that comes from his grave, and spirit-stirring and touching the discourse which 'he, being dead, yet speaketh.' His example lingers behind him; the imperishable of his nature walks among his flock, visiting their homes, comforting the mourner, warning the careless, and teaching the ignorant, and continues to stand in the pulpit which the living man occupied, and to 'reason of righteousness, and temperance, and judgment.'"

How emphatically true is all this of the books that an author leaves behind. The writer of an infidel or immoral publication dies as a fool dies: and what a mercy would it be for the world, and for himself too, if all his works could be buried in his grave with him, and if the worms that destroy his body could also consume the poison of his books. But this cannot be; and, like Jeroboam, who made Israel to sin ages after he had gone to his own place, the writer of a bad book lives to corrupt the generations to come; to drag others down to the pit of perdition after him; and to obtain, as applicable to himself, the unenviable distinction of Achan's doom, of whom it is said, "This man perished not alone in his iniquity."

On the other hand, how rich are the honours, how lasting the benefits, how ample the rewards, of authorship when it is connected with the interests of piety and virtue. Truth is immortal; ideas never perish. He who has written one religious book which the present generation does not neglect, and future ones will not suffer to die, has contributed a work which will go on converting souls and edifying the church, ages, and perhaps centuries, after he has reached heaven himself,

its felicities may be increased to him by the arrival of another and another spirit, conducted thither by the volume which he left behind him on earth. Many a modest author, who has not physical energy to command the attention of the crowd, or courage to meet their gaze, may, by one such useful work, speak with a louder tongue, and to a larger audience, than ever fell to the lot of a living orator. Doubly blessed is he who, by an attractive voice, addressed the multitude while he lived, and continues to speak to them by his books when he is dead. Every one will recognise, in all this, the history and labours of the great and good man whose loss we this day mourn.

II. It is the consolation of the church to know that though its ministers die, its divine head still lives.

Elijah was removed, but Elijah's God remained. When Dr. John Owen was near death, a friend who visited him was expressing his deep sense of the deprivation which the Church of Christ would suffer by his decease. The expiring theologian modestly and touchingly replied, "I am leaving the vessel in a storm; but what is the loss of a poor under rower, like myself, while the great Pilot is on board!" So may it be said of every other minister. Die who will, Jesus lives; and while he lives, the decease of the most illustrious of his servants is but as the falling of a star, while the moon shines in beauty; or the extinction of a lamp, while the sun blazes in glory; only the drying up of a stream, while the fountain is still full and overflowing. As in forming the noblest intellect, and constructing the loftiest character, Christ exhausted not his material, nor diminished his power; so neither by their death is he impoverished by a mite of his treasure. Sometimes

we see him apparently taking great pains in producing an instrument, as for the performance of some work of renown; and then, when every eye is observant, and every mind expectant, laying it aside, and seeming to say, "I can do without it." Oh, what men the church has had, has lost, and has survived; what illustrious fathers! what noble reformers! what profound theologians! what learned scholars! what enlightened commentators! what eloquent preachers! what martyr-like missionaries! In reference to whom the question must be asked, "Your fathers, where are they? and the prophets, do they live for ever?" They are in their graves, and yet the church lives. It has had prophets, lost them, and yet lives; apostles, they are gone, and yet the church lives. Yea, it has had, and lost, the bodily presence of its Divine Head, and yet lives in his absence. He has retired, but he has not only left the inspired Scriptures, the sacraments, and the ministry of the Word, he has sent the Holy Spirit, which is more than a compensation for his visible presence, as he himself tells us; and having that, as the peculiar privilege of our dispensation, we have no occasion to wish for his personal, visible reign. It may seem a bold expression, but it is a true one, that we can do better without Christ's bodily and miracle-working presence, than without the power and presence of the Holy Spirit. How consolatory in view of the ravages of death desolating our sanctuaries are his own sublime words to John, in the isle of Patmos: "These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand." Not one can drop from that hand either through its weakness or carelessness, or in mistake; and when he extinguishes one, he can light up others. Still more

sublime, more instructive, and more consolatory, is that other language used on the same occasion: "Fear not, I am the first and the last. I am he that liveth and was dead, and am alive for evermore; Amen: and have the keys of Hades, and of death." Can anything surpass this? What an idea is it, to conceive of the Saviour of the world, standing with all the uncreated glories of the godhead, and all the milder beauties of the perfect man, at the gate of eternity, with the keys at his girdle, yea, in his hand, to open those mysterious doors, and never trusting these keys for a moment out of his own hand to the highest archangel in heaven. No one dies at random, but always when he turns the key. What a momentous thing is it to die, since he prescribes our death. And then with what courage may we approach the gate of death, since we are sure to find the Redeemer there, with the key to let us through, to cheer us as we pass, and to receive us on the other side. Nor is this all that is implied in the sublimities of this wondrous passage; for he that holds the keys of death, must also sway the sceptre over the living. Yea, he is Lord of both.

The apostle has said, in one single expression, far more than enough to calm our fears and sustain our hopes for the welfare of the church, whatever opposition may be raised by its enemies, and whatever ravages may be committed by the last of them all, where he says, "He is head over all things to his church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." Nothing can happen without his permission or appointment. The death of some men comes upon us as with the shock of an earthquake, when all faces look pale, and all feel alarm. The pillars of the earth fall, and the earth

itself seems to tremble; but not a vibration reaches the pillars of heaven, or shakes the throne on which the universal governor sits in undisturbed repose. Not a promise of revelation is expunged from the page of scripture when the greatest human names are blotted out from the register of living men; nor is there a diminution of power in the arm of Jehovah Jesus when the greatest of his servants are stricken down by the hand of death. In times of persecution, when the tyrant's sword fell chiefly upon the ministers of the church, just as in battle officers are picked off first, and when the church itself was reduced so low as to be traced only by the blood of the martyrs, or the light of their flames, He attracted its drooping attention, and raised its expiring hopes by these all-inspiring words, "I live, and because I live ye shall live also." And then she rose fresh in power and might over the ashes of her friends and the fury of her foes; celestial glory beamed around her, and they that hated her fled before her; and, in our own days, that same Divine Redeemer is seen by the eye of faith, standing over the grave of our departed pastors and cheering our hearts amidst the spoils of death, with these grand and comforting words, "I am the resurrection and the life."

III. I now remark, that the death of eminent ministers should lead to much solicitude and earnest prayer that God would raise up others in their stead, and manifest his power and grace as conspicuously in their successors as he did in them. "Where is the Lord God of Elijah?"

This question did not, of course, imply any scepticism as to his existence, nor any disbelief of his being "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever;" or any distrust

of his being able to do the same by the successor of the great prophet as he had done by him. It was an expression of deep solicitude that he would be with Elisha as he had been with Elijah; a hope, mingled with some fear, that this would be the case, and an earnest prayer for the continued energy of Jehovah. Elisha grasped the mantle tentatively, and perhaps tremblingly smote the waters; but he waited scarcely a moment for the relief of his solicitude and the answer of his prayers. The stream obeyed the stroke, and to Elisha's faith sent forth the voice, "The Lord God of Elijah is with Elisha." And then commenced a series of miracles by this holy man which, if not so sublime as those of his predecessor, were more merciful and benignant.

From us our Elijahs have of late been departing. In addition to the loss we this day deplore, how many eminent men, in various sections of the church, have, within the last few years, left our world! Look to the vacant place of the mighty Chalmers, and of the grave, holy, and venerable Gordon, in the Free Church of Scotland. Think of Bickersteth, in the Church of England, that type of holy love and christian gentleness; and of Tottenham, of your own city, that man of God, so greatly and so justly beloved. I may mention the honoured name of Cox, among the Baptists; and that heavy loss of ours, the departure of Pye Smith, who united in himself so much of profound scholarship with sound orthodoxy. And then, that more recent deprivation, which, in the death of Wardlaw, has deprived us of one of the brightest ornaments of nonconformity, of the most distinguished sons of sacred literature, of the most able and uncompromising, and, at the same time, the most dispassionate of controversialists. And to these

must now be added the name of Collyer, who was fifty-three years pastor of the church at Peckham, one of the most popular preachers of his day, the author of several valuable works, and of whom the father of our beloved Sovereign was a personal friend, and the monarch herself was a playmate of his daughter. In thinking of such losses, we have a sense of privation partaking of desolateness. An animating influence that pervaded, enlarged, and raised our minds, is, in each case, extinct. "While ready to give due honours to all valuable preachers, and, knowing that the light of christian instruction will still shine with useful lustre, and that new ones will continually rise, we involuntarily and pensively turn at the decease of such men, to look at the fading colours in the distant but still glowing horizon where the great luminary has set."

There is a danger of feeling as if the Lord God had withdrawn his presence and his power with his retiring Elijah, and had returned in the chariot with his honoured and triumphant servant. How deep should be our solicitude about the future ministry. It would be unmeet at all times, but especially so on the present occasion, to institute any comparison between the ministry of this day and their predecessors. But one thing I will mention. The men of the past age appear to have had more distinctness of aim, more directness of effort, more simplicity of intention, and more devotedness of life, in reference to the great objects of the christian ministry, than many who are rising up to fill their places. Instead, however, of going into these particulars, I would rather call to anxiety and prayer. Over the graves of these departed men, I repeat the exhortation of our Lord, "The harvest is great and

the labourers are few; pray ye, therefore, the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth more labourers into his field." I would take occasion of the death of the eminent individual whose decease has occasioned this discourse, to call the attention of the churches to the momentous subject of our ministry. It is of indescribable importance to every section of the christian church. Preaching is God's chief instrument for the salvation of souls; and it is the centre of other instrumentalities that revolve around it. The character and quality of the ministry must give the character and quality of the religion of the nation. The pulpit is the mould in which the religious type of a people is cast. And when we consider, as we may in some cases consider, what an influence for good or for evil one man has had in advocating truth or error; in saving souls, or destroying them; in rousing or deepening the slumbering piety of a congregation in an age, we cannot but feel the vast consequence of making the subject of the ministry a matter of deep, anxious, and universal interest. Who can read the labours of Whitefield, or of Wesley, or of many others of less note who were their successors among the Methodistic company, of whom I have so often heard our departed friend, who knew them best, descant in terms of graphic description and eloquent admiration, or observe the wondrous effects in the conversion of souls, which followed their preaching, without uttering, in tones of impassioned lamentation and inquiry, "Where is the Lord God of Elijah?" I do not disparage the men whom God has given to us in our day, and still permits to live. We have pious men, learned men, devoted men; but the state of the world is now such, the work to be done is so vast, that we need

apostolic men, such as Paul and Barnabas; men in all respects formed upon an apostolic model, inspiration and miracles excepted. For such men let us hope, and pray, and look, and wait.

How many inferences, important in their nature, and eminently useful, because instructive and practical in their bearing, may be deduced from such a subject.

1. How little reason have we to lament the cessation of the ancient prophetic office, since we have the complete canon of inspired Scripture, and the divine institution of the Christian ministry. It might seem to have been a distinguished privilege of the Jews, and so it was, to have visible and living messengers to go between them and God, and bear to them the communications of Jehovah; to come, as it were, to them direct from his presence, and with living voice to make the proclamation, "Thus saith the Lord." One is ready to imagine with what awe they would listen to announcements but just made by the Most High; and how impressed they must have been by those visible signs and symbolic actions by which the messages were confirmed and illustrated. The history of the Jews dispels the illusion; for the prophets, with all their sublime revelations, were often to them only as men who related idle tales. With the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments in our hands; with the voice of the faithful expounders of their contents continually sounding in our ears; with stated times for assembling to receive these lessons of divine wisdom, we have an immense advantage even over Israel of old. In this, as well as in everything else, we have an accession of privilege by the substitution of the gospel for the legal dispensation. Yea, we may go so far as to say, that the institute of the

ministry, extended, as it can be, over the face of the earth, and permanent in its duration, as well as constant in its operation, is, perhaps, a greater blessing to the world than would be the personal ministry of our Lord, local and restricted as that must be, were he again upon earth.

2. If the death of eminent ministers be such a loss, how much ought their services to be valued, and how diligently improved, while they live.

Nothing that is really valueless in possession, can be a loss when it is removed. Gain and loss must, of necessity, measure and balance each other. As in regard to other blessings, so with this, the value of a holy and faithful minister; he is best appreciated when he is removed. Many have to learn his worth at his grave. "He was a burning and a shining light," and they walked in his light; but they thought as little of their privilege as persons who daily enjoy the light of the sun do of his value, until the glorious luminary undergoes a total eclipse, and they see the noon-day become as the night. The dead are gone, except as they remain in our memories. The living still live and labour; but let those who enjoy their ministry consider how soon the silence of the tomb may hush that voice, which it is their privilege to hear, sabbath after sabbath, giving out "the joyful sound," and by its utterances instructing their minds; rousing their consciences; thrilling their hearts with the feelings of holy joy or salutary compunction; guiding them through the intricacies, and comforting them amidst the sorrows, of life; and aiding them in their passage to life and immortality. Let them so conduct themselves towards that faithful minister, as to have no reproaches from their conscience, when,

after his death, they dwell upon his ministrations; no remorse when they call to recollection his love; no dread when they contemplate meeting him at the judgment day. Few are the persons who, whatever may have been the exemplary affection they felt and manifested for an object of regard while yet it was in the land of the living, do not feel regret at the recollection of some instances of unkindness which they wish had never occurred, or having occurred, they could wish to forget. One of the best lessons to be learned at the grave of dead friends, is to be more attentive to the comfort of those that still live. Let churches remember, that it is better to show their regard for their pastors round their pulpit, than at their tomb.

3. What a lesson of dependence upon the living Saviour does the death of ministers teach the churches: a lesson which many will not learn in any other way.

There are ministers in every age and country of such elevated genius, sanctified talents, and extensive usefulness, who have secured so much of the confidence of the churches, either by their pulpit labours or by their published works, and seem so essential to the body to which they belong, that we sink unconsciously into a state of too great dependence upon them, and lean upon their arm of flesh. It is obvious to every minute observer of the state of public feeling, that there never was an age in which the churches of Christ were more in danger of dependence upon men instead of God, upon ministers instead of Christ, than that in which we live. The human mind is in such a career of progress, and its achievements are so vast, that the worship of man by man is the sin and danger of the day. This sin and danger have crept into the church; and the pulpit is too

much regarded as the pedestal on which the preacher is to be exalted to receive the homage which the congregations are assembled to pay to his talents. It is Paul, Apollos, and Cephas who are depended upon, and not "God that giveth the increase." Death comes and seals the lip of eloquence, quenches the splendour of genius, and hides in the grave the object of admiration with all his talents. Oh! what lessons of dependence on Christ, rather than his ministers, are taught at the graves of such men! How unwise, as well as unholy, is that reliance which hangs upon the frail tenure of a beating pulse! Let the knell, which has so frequently of late proclaimed the departure of some of our best ministers, be heard and felt as an announcement from God, "Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils, for wherein is he to be accounted of?"

4. With this let us connect an entire and unshaken confidence in the divine Head of the Church.

Christ invites, demands, and deserves our confidence. Until the throne of the universe is vacant, or the sceptre of the church has dropped from his grasp, or he has remitted the government of his kingdom to other hands, it is too soon for us to despond. Were all the pulpits on earth vacant, and all the churches in mourning for their deceased pastors, still, while omnipotence resides in his arm, infinite wisdom guides his footsteps, and boundless stores of life and grace are at his command, we may yet confide in Him. Shall our dismay at the ravages of death be stronger than our faith and hope in the government of Christ? Shall the king of terrors frighten us out of our confidence in the King of kings? There are signs of the times which tend to excite alarm, and cause us to say, in some degree of apprehension,

"Where is the Lord God of Elijah?" It was not a man of weak nerve and perturbed imagination, but Elisha himself, who asked the question, and asked it probably, in some measure, with anxious reference to those very schools of the prophets, which his great predecessor had superintended, and from which he feared some might issue, who would not be faithful to their God and their calling. Similar apprehensions disturb the peace of some of God's devoted servants now. Let faith, however, predominate over fear, and confidence be firmly settled on Him in whose infinite life the church lives, and whose resources of vitality and power are as little affected by the birth and death of his ministers as those of the orb of day are by the kindling or extinguishing of the candles of our houses or the lamps of our streets.

5. How incumbent upon our churches is the spirit of prayer for a constant supply of able and devout ministers to supply the loss of those removed by death.

We, in an especial manner, depend upon the influences of the Spirit of God for the ministry of the Word and the supply of our pulpits. We bring up no youths for the pulpit; we leave it to Divine grace to call them first, and then to Providence to indicate their course. Hence our duty is not only to pray for a Divine blessing upon our ministers, but for a Divine blessing in giving us our ministers. Therefore, by the memory of the men who have departed from us; by the recollection of their piety, their labours, and their successes; by the destitute condition of many of our churches; by the calls upon us, so loud and so numerous, for faithful and devoted pastors; by the strange and momentous aspect of the times; by the testimony borne to us from so

many quarters that, amidst all the facilities and advantages for converting the world to Christ, a greatly multiplied and increasingly-devoted ministry is what we most need; by a regard to the interests of the present generation and the hope of all future ones, I conjure you to let there be one loud, general, importunate cry, "Where is the Lord God of Elijah?"

I now come to that part of the discourse which has, perhaps, been impatiently waited for by the congregation, but which is approached by the preacher with fear and trembling, under a deep sense of his incompetency to do it even ordinary justice; I mean a reference to the great and good man whose decease has given occasion for it. Never did I more shrink from any task which I was called to perform. It has been my honour, for many years, to be admitted to the inner circle of Mr. Jay's friends; and, in one of the seasons of our intercourse, he made the request that I would discharge the duty which now devolves upon me. Conscious, at the time, that it required an abler hand than mine to sketch such a character, I evaded the subject, and gave no promise; and when, on his first alarming illness, it became likely that I should be applied to, I wrote to one of his friends, begging that, in the event of his removal, some other minister might be selected for this office. Necessity, however, was laid upon me; to this I have yielded: and, under the anxieties which it has produced, I am relieved by two considerations. First, that Mr. Jay has been so long and so well known; and not more known, than loved, respected, and revered, not only in this city, but throughout the kingdom, and other kingdoms also; so that his name suggests both his character and his history. It is therefore consolatory

to me to recollect, that what is deficient in my account, the memory of thousands can supply, and what is mistaken, their knowledge can correct. But there is another source of consolation to me; and that is, that our venerable friend has been his own biographer; and, now that the hand of death has unlocked the repository of those precious manuscripts which contain the record of his history, we shall soon better know from his own pen than any other can tell us, what, by the grace of God, he was and did. I may refer also, to the recent number of your own city journal, in which is a delineation of his character equally beautiful and just, and which, as drawn by the pen of an episcopalian, does no less credit to the holy and catholic virtues of his heart than it does to the analytic and descriptive powers of his intellect. Around the tomb of Mr. Jay, who, though he more especially belonged to one denomination, was the common property of all, we forget our distinctions, and seem to remember only that we are Christians.

Mr. Jay was born at Tisbury, in the county of Wilts. Like many others of the greatest names which adorn the pages of our secular and ecclesiastial history, he rose to his lofty altitude of fame and usefulness from obscurity; and, in common with all great minds in similar circumstances, was never ashamed of his origin. There is a nobility of a more valuable kind than that which an earthly heraldry bestows: and those distinctions are most honourable and most to be coveted, which are won before they are worn. Divine grace, blessing his own energies, as the architect of his own character, made him what he was. It was his happiness to be converted to God, in his native village, while a ruddy youth; and to feel, as soon as he had gained salvation

for himself, the impulsive power of his new and holy passion, urging him to the work of saving others. In the domestic seminary of that saintly man, the Rev. Cornelius Winter, of Painswick, he found the kind of tuition which served best to develop and to nurture the spiritual idiosyncrasies of his mind and heart.

Mr. Jay's own account, in his Jubilee Sermon, of his early history, both as to his student-life, under Mr. Winter, and his settlement in Bath, may, with propriety, be here given:

"Though it is now just half a century since my connection with this church, yet I laboured here occasionally, and sometimes for several Sabbaths together, during more than a year previously to my ordination. Neither was this the commencement of my ministry: I began preaching before I was sixteen, and had preached nearly one thousand sermons before I was of age. Now I do not boast of this; yea, I should rather reflect upon it, had it been the result of my own forwardness. But I was under a tutor whose authority I was bound not to dispute, but to obey. Our academy was at Marlborough; and the state of the villages all around was truly deplorable.

"In some of those villages I have preached down many a livelong Sabbath, in the homely cottage, on the green before the door, or in some open place in the road, or in a field hard by. How often have I wished to revisit all these hamlets! But, alas! how few should I now find alive, and who would be able to remember what he was always then called, 'the boy preacher.'

"Upon leaving the academy I felt myself too young to undertake the pastoral office. I therefore chose an obscure village, where I had preached frequently while a student, to enjoy retreat and to pursue my improvement. Income I looked not after, provided my personal wants were supplied. My fixed salary, therefore, was thirty-five pounds a year, and my board in a private family. But being then known, and not unpopular, I was frequently drawn forth to supply the neighbouring churches; and being ill-supplied with books, the design of my retirement was very imperfectly answered.

"I then met with Lady Maxwell, who engaged me to officiate in her chapel at the Hotwells. There I was for nearly a year, not without proofs of acceptance and usefulness, as the place filled and crowded. I was, therefore, pressed by her ladyship to take the over-

sight of the congregation. At the same time, having preached in Bath before and during the illness of my predecessor here (who with his dying breath recommended me to succeed him), I received an invitation also to settle in Argyle chapel. For a time I was perplexed; but, while deliberating on these two proposals, some circumstances arose which immediately determined my movement towards this city. The step was to me an event of unspeakable importance, but it was instantly followed by a conviction that I was where I ought to be: and this conviction never for a moment wavered. Disregarding, therefore, all subsequent offers to change my situation (and some of them, compared to my salary, were very lucrative), I resolved to continue in a connection which has proved a peculiarly happy one; but which has, as you here see,* witnessed the lapse of the larger and better part of my life. It is worthy of remark, that the first text I ever preached from, among those who were to become my 'hope,' and 'joy,' and 'crown of rejoicing,' was, 'What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter.'

"Some time after the acceptance of the call, I was ordained—fifty years ago, yesterday. The charge was addressed to me by my honoured friend and tutor, Mr. Winter; and the sermon to the people was preached by the Rev. John Adams, of Salisbury. I was a young pastor, but the people despised not my youth; and, under various deficiencies and inexperience, they patiently waited for more maturity from ripening seasons.

"Without entering into the minuteness of any human system of divinity (which I would not do for any people under heaven), I engaged to preach Mr. Hervey's three R's, as they have been called, ruin, redemption, regeneration; ruin by Adam, redemption by Christ, and regeneration by the Spirit. From these principles, and these are principles, I have never seen cause yet to swerve. And though, in this long course of things, there have been many 'Lo, here's,' and 'Lo, there's,' I have been too much bent on the good old way to be attracted by them. If in any minor things I have ever differed from my brethren, and have had faith, I have had it to myself before God; or I have said, 'Let every one be fully persuaded in his own mind.'

"The state of things at my coming to Bath was not considerable, but it was encouraging; and there seemed to be an open door, and not only room, but a call, for increased exertion. Our Baptist friends had a church, but it allowed of no mixed communion. The Wesleyans had an interest, which was very prosperous; and there was a chapel

* Referring to his grey hairs.

belonging to the Countess of Huntingdon, which had been a great blessing, but it was then supplied by episcopalian ministers only; and the exclusion of other preachers who had laboured there before gave rise to a secession of persons who had been awakened, and converted, and edified, by their labours. This led, eventually, to the formation of the Independent church here: for the seceding members were encouraged by their former ministers, and especially by the Rev. Rowland Hill (who all through life ever took the liberal side of things), to secure a place, and to act for themselves; which they immediately did. In the Church of England there was nothing which the Evangelical clergy who visited Bath would, according to their views, consider the gospel; and none of them could gain admittance into any pulpit of the Establishment here for many years after my settlement, except that of my respected father-in-law, who was then officiating at Batheaston, though his living was at a distance. Perhaps the opinion of such a man as Mr. Wilberforce, an episcopalian himself, concerning the state of things here at that period, may be more regarded than my own. In one of his letters, after kindly admonishing me (and the admonition was not needless or useless) to be very explicitly evangelical in every discourse, he says, 'I am aware that your own congregation may not stand in need of this; but, indeed, my dear sir, you are a debtor both to Greeks and barbarians. Consider the situation in which you stand; not another minister in Bath whom any of the poor, wretched upper classes are likely to hear, who preaches the gospel! They come, perhaps, to your chapel; they never heard the word of life before; they never may have another opportunity. Pity them, my dear sir, as I know you do. They, above all others, deserve to be pitied. I, alas! have been more acquainted with them than you, and am thereby the more impressed with the sense of their wretched ignorance in spiritual things.'

"A church, therefore, of our own faith and order, seemed to be here desired. To this encouragement was given, not only by residents, but by visitors. One, in particular, from London, a banker who nearly, if not entirely, at his own expense, fitted up the old Roman Catholic chapel (which, for the glory of God, had been burned down in the Gordon riots), and engaged, on his recommendation of a minister, to support him till the people were able to bear the burden. That house, now used by our friends, the Quakers, proving too small, my predecessor, encouraged especially by Lady Glenorchy, who promised a considerable sum (which was lost by her untimely death) and others of his friends, was induced to undertake the erection

of this place. When ready for use, that excellent man of God for whom it was erected, was too ill to open it, though he was present; I therefore performed all the services of the day; and, as I was the first preacher in this place, so I have been the only pastor of this people."

We do not wonder at the paternal partialities of Mr. Winter for such a student, or his pride in him; but we are a little inclined to express our surprise that he should imperil the character of his favourite pupil by sending him out to preach before he was sixteen. Pulpit prodigies in boyhood have rarely continued to be prodigies in manhood. Mr. Jay tells us himself, that he preached a thousand sermons before he was of age: and when we recollect how extraordinarily popular he was as a preacher at seventeen or eighteen years of age, we see at once how well his heart must have been established by grace, and how much of strong and manly intelligence, and deep humility, he must have possessed, not to have been spoiled, at the outset, by pride and vanity. Thanks to Divine power and love, for watching and guarding that beautiful bud of ministerial excellence, which had been exposed by others, somewhat injudiciously, to the withering influence of the fervid sun of public favour. But perhaps, after all, Mr. Jay's history is not to be judged of by rules of general application. Young Jay discovered his good sense by coveting the seclusion of a village as his first sphere of ministerial labour; and therefore, for the improvement of his mind, settled for a year at the village of Christian Malford, in Wilts. I have seen a picture of his little chapel, and certainly it was not one which would repel the sarcasm, that "dissent is the religion of barns." Who that had seen him in that little chapel, surrounded by his rustic congregation, would have imagined what a splendid

career was before him? His fame, as a preacher, spread far and wide; and he was requested, before he reached his twentieth year, by the Rev. Rowland Hill, to supply the pulpit of Surrey Chapel. His popularity at his first visit was so great, and the crowd was so large, that, after the sermon, he had to address, from the window of the chapel house, the multitude who could not gain admission to the place of worship, and who loitered in the yard to catch a glimpse and a word of the youthful preacher. Among his hearers, on one of those occasions, he told me, was the venerable John Newton, who, with paternal kindness, perceiving the budding excellences of Mr. Jay as a minister, and the danger to which he was of necessity exposed, by this full gale of popular applause, followed him from the chapel into the house, and gave him, in the most affectionate manner, some cautions and advice, eminently suited to the perilous circumstances in which he was placed. From the benefit which he derived from Mr. Newton's kindness, our dear friend argued the duty of elder ministers to act the part of kind, faithful, and judicious friends, to younger, and especially popular, ones.

Mr. Jay's settlement in Bath took place in the year 1791. Bath was then a more celebrated place than it is now. It was the very vortex of fashion, and elegant dissipation; its waters had not lost their therapeutic character; other midland places of resort had not risen up to be its rivals; the continent was closed, by war, against us; and therefore it was crowded with rank, wealth, and disease. The fashionable came here to be amused; the valetudinarian to be cured; the dying to forget their mortality in the echoes brought even to their sick chamber, of the song and the dance. For

such a situation Mr. Jay was eminently suited. Attractive in personal appearance; with a musical voice; a demeanour that combined the simplicity of village manners with the polish of the city; and what was more than all, and better than all, with a deeply rooted piety in his heart, and a rich unction of evangelical truth in his sermons, he was suited to the place, and the place to him. His ministry soon drew upon him the eyes not only of the citizens, but of those who came here as visitors; and, as at that time, Bath was not favoured, as it happily now is, with evangelical ministrations in the pulpits of the Church of England, the pious, and many of the illustrious, members of that communion, who came here either for recreation or health, were glad to avail themselves of the benefit of his acceptable public services, and of his private friendship. Among these were Mr. Wilberforce and Mrs. Hannah More. Unworthy attempts have been made to conceal the friendship of these distinguished individuals for Mr. Jay. His autobiography, however, will successfully draw aside the veil which has been cast over this subject, and prove how close was the intimacy between the liberator of Africa, the authoress of Barley Wood, and the minister of Argyle chapel.

This was undoubtedly a situation of great peril to a young man. Courted by the great, and flattered by the fair; with nobles, and even bishops among his hearers; with carriages at his door, and senators in his house; with increasing fame abroad as a preacher, and that, now swelled by his incipient renown as an author, how great was his danger! Let us pause and "glorify God in him;" let us dwell upon the grace that preserved him the modest, unassuming, humble, and spiritual chris-

tian, the earnest and faithful preacher of the gospel. Let us bless God that Mr. Jay did not sink the holy disciple of Christ in the obsequious courtier; and the servant of God in the sycophant of man. Against the tide of fashionable temptation setting in so strongly against him, he stood firm as a rock; and while ever at the call of sickness, or the invitations of holy friendship, he was rarely found at the tables of the great, never at the parties of the gay. Nor did he allow himself to be seduced, by the attentions which he received, from the primitive simplicity of his domestic hours and habits. A man of less decision of character, of less holy nerve of mind, would have been carried away from his propriety by surrounding circumstances, and have become the ape of fashion, and the slave of its votaries. He, with all that became a plain gentleman, adopted nothing that did not become the man of God. In all this he was assisted by the excellent woman whom he had chosen to be the light of his dwelling, and the mistress of his household.

In this manner and in this place he held on the even tenor of his way, advancing from one stage and degree of honour and usefulness to another, as the sphere of his pulpit labours abroad, and love and respect for him at home, continually widened, while one work after another from the press added to both. At one period of his ministry his friends and the public were alarmed for his invaluable life by a serious attack of disease. With this exception he enjoyed, upon the whole, good health, and till his closing scenes, was rarely kept by illness from his pulpit a single sabbath, which is to be attributed, under the blessing of God, to his temperate, and, in reference to one branch of dietetics, I may

say, his abstinent, habits; to his early rising, and his regular exercise. In summer, the labourer going to his work would meet him returning from his walk; or the neighbour, that by accident was looking from a chamber window, might see him with spade and rake in his garden; and in winter that neighbour might feel as he lay in bed the vibration of the sturdy blow of his implement chopping or cleaving wood. He had four parts of every day devoted to study, all well occupied, and each of them was longer than some men give to it in twenty-four hours. It is to this distribution, occupation, and diligent improvement of his time, that we owe those ten precious volumes which he has left as a rich legacy to the world and the church.

By the blessing of God upon his method of promoting his health, he reached, amidst the congratulations, not only of his own church, but those of every other, his Jubilee. It is one of the holiest, loveliest, and happiest sights out of heaven, to see the men of the present generation with their fathers, as the autumnal leaves of the past, and their children, as the vernal buds of the future, gathering, in the fiftieth year of his ministry, round the chair of an aged pastor, as he sits among them upon a throne for which princes might be proud to exchange their own; each individual having come to offer his appropriate token of affection, and all, in one blessed fellowship, to bear their united testimony of gratitude, respect, and love;—thus to "be witnesses, and God also, how holily, and justly, and unblamcably he had behaved himself among them that believe." There, also, in the outer circle of this happy company, are fathers and brethren in the ministry, who are present to testify, emphatically, how they esteem and

love the man who, for fifty years, has never committed any offence to disparage their order, or to cast blame upon their ministry. And even beyond all this are heard the plaudits and the praises of the occasion, echoed by journals and magazines from every quarter of the land. Oh! this is an honour for which angels might feel no reluctance to barter their distinctions! And such honour had Mr. Jay. His jubilee was a sacred ovation.

It was scarcely to be expected then, however much it might be desired, that thirteen years more would be added to his exertions; yet so it was. These, however, from various causes, were not the happiest portions of his life or ministry. The dregs of life are rarely sweet. The last stage of our journey to eternity is often over a rough road, under stormy skies, and amongst gathering shades. But it is a comfort to know it is the last, as our father's house, and the lights of its windows, can be seen through the gloomy avenue by which it is approached. Till his attack at Worthing, last August twelve-months, Mr. Jay was able, as you know, to occupy his pulpit once each Lord's day. During a part of that time he was assisted by my highly-accomplished and excellent friend and new neighbour, Mr. Vaughan. Finding the labour and sorrow of the feeble strength of more than fourscore years increasing upon him, in October, 1852, he sent in his resignation of the pastoral office, which did not however come into effect till the following January, when he had held it during the long term of sixty-three years. Since that time, scenes have occurred to which, on every account, only a passing allusion should here be made; scenes which fell with heavy weight of sorrow upon his heart, and tended to deepen the shadows of the dark valley; but

from which he has now passed to that altitude of bliss which the clouds of earthly griefs and cares roll too low to reach, where no note of discord is heard, no strife or division is seen; and to which, when we ascend, if we shall be so happy as to reach it, we shall see, as he now does, that "all things work together for good," and that these things that have happened have "fallen out for the furtherance of the gospel." Were it permitted him to speak to us now from behind that veil which conceals him from our view, it is not difficult to imagine it would be in the apostolic language, "If there be therefore any consolation in Christ; if any comfort of love; if any fellowship of the Spirit; if any bowels and mercies; fulfil ye my joy, that ye be like minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through strife or vain glory, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves." Venerable shade! immortal man! have I wrongly interpreted thy views and thy feelings in the language I have just quoted, and put into thy lips?

After his resignation of the pastorate, Mr. Jay never again preached in Bath; but the ruling passion for the pulpit, strong in death, led him to deliver, amidst much feebleness, several short discourses at Bradford, where he had a residence, and to which, with the faithful, devoted, and affectionate companion of his last days, he often retired. Nor did his labours as an author, any more than his efforts as a preacher, cease till he almost reached the verge of the grave. Forty years ago he preached a course of sermons on Scripture Female Biography, from the publication of which, he told me, he was then deterred by the appearance of a similar work from the pen

of the late Dr. Cox, of Hackney; and although another edition of that valuable work was, at my suggestion, published by the author not long before his lamented decease, Mr. Jay very properly considered that this was now no reason why, as the manuscripts were still preserved, his work should not be given to the public. It was a beautiful and impressive spectacle, and shows how appropriate to him, in many of its parts, is the discourse which has been delivered this morning, to see this venerable man, at the age of eighty-four, till within two or three days of his death, amidst weakness, anguish, and weariness, diverting his thoughts from painful subjects, and beguiling the hours of solitude, suffering, and sorrow, by revising the proof sheets of his forthcoming work; thus reviewing the thoughts and words of former days in the light of his setting sun, and with the riper wisdom and richer experience of age, confirming the labours of his meridian strength; and furnishing a striking corroboration and illustration of those poetic words of the Psalmist, "The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree; he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God; they shall still bring forth fruit in old age."

In such a manner, when pain and suffering would allow it, associated as this employment was with grateful, yet humble recollections of the past, and peaceful, yet solemn anticipations of the future, shedding upon his ministering friends smiles like the rays of a setting sun, did this hoary servant of Christ shut up his earthly history, and finish his meetness to commence the heavenly one. He was himself always reluctant to disclose the secrets of a dying chamber, and to dwell much

upon the last utterances of a departing soul. And, therefore, I have solicited no memorabilia from those into whose ear he breathed out his farewell accents. It was not possible, however, that I should be in the company of his mourning family after the funeral, and seek, or find, any other topic of conversation than the departed; and equally improbable that much would not come out in conversation, which, without violating his own delicate wish, not to be made a spectacle of after death, would serve to illustrate his beautiful character, and show how like himself he was to the last. We would not say there was nothing in his life that became him like its end, but rather that his end became the holy, dignified, humble course he had always pursued; there was the same deep and unaffected humility; the same gleams of playful fancy, mingling with his deep seriousness; which looked like gentle flashes of summer's lightning, issuing from the clouds of sickness and disease, on his horizon; the same affection beaming out on all around him; the same settled hope and solid peace, but not rapturous or talkative. The portions of God's word that he dwelt most upon, were such as these: "O Lord, I have waited for thy salvation, let me not be ashamed of my hope;" "Looking for the mercy of God, through Jesus Christ, unto eternal life;" "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath begotten us again to a lively hope of an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away; reserved in heaven for you who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation." On Christmas day, he plaintively said to a friend, "This is a sorrowful Christmas day; but I can say, 'Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift.'" I may mention in order to show how clear his intellect

was two days before his death, and how strong his taste and habit for making sermons remained to the last, that he dictated to Mr. Bolton, his son-in-law, who was going to preach to the young of his congregation, the outlines of a sermon upon the text, "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to thy word." One expression which he used, when his friends were sympathising with him under his great sufferings, was so impressively and solemnly instructive, that it ought to be mentioned: "Ah! you know not what it is to die." Who does, but those who have been gathered to the congregation of the dead? But we shall all know it. May we be all prepared for it!

I will venture also to allude to the last interview which I was permitted to hold with him a month before his decease. I was thus privileged, above most, in being allowed to see him just when his feet were touching the brink of the dark cold flood, and his eye was upon the stream; and I can assure you there was no shudder at crossing, no casting back a longing lingering look on earth. Having recovered from a burst of emotion on my entering the room, he conversed, as far as suffering would permit, with solemn cheerfulness and deep humility. The great truths which he had so many years preached to you in life, were now the foundation of his hope, and the support of his soul in death. It was to me an unspeakably impressive scene, to see that man whom millions delighted to honour, reduced to a state of such weakness and suffering; and yet, a no less joyful one, to see the power of grace triumphing over the helplessness of humanity, and to observe the glory which was beaming from his soul, and irradiating the mortal paleness of his countenance. His intellect was still

clear; and that fine voice which had penetrated multitudes to the soul, sealed in death, though with faltering tones, the testimony which he had borne for Christ in his life. On my referring to that expression in the ninety-first Psalm, as applicable to his own case, "With long life will I satisfy him and show him my salvation;" "Ah!" replied he, "Beza said on his death-bed, 'I have known the fulfilment of every part of the Psalm but the last verse, and I shall know that in an hour.' My experience," he said, "Is contained in those words of David, 'O God of my salvation, in thee do I trust, let me not be ashamed of my hope.'" We then gathered round the domestic altar, in the sacrifice of which he joined with deep solemnity and emotion; and we parted till we shall meet in that world where death and the curse are known no more.

How much could be told by those who witnessed them, of the unruffled serenity, the uncomplaining resignation, and exemplary patience, with which, during his long period of suffering, he bore the weight of his long and grievous affliction: "I mourn," he exclaimed, "but I do not murmur. O Lord, consider my affliction, and forgive all my sins." The moment at length came, and is past, when death, as an angel of mercy rather than as the king of terrors, approached with a step so soft and noiseless as not to disturb the slumbers which were soon to be succeeded by an eternal repose. "And when the heaving of his breast was stilled for ever, and the happy spirit dismissed from her tabernacle of clay, it was by a touch so gentle that the last breath was unperceived. No mortal struggle—no agonising convulsion marked the moment of the soul's departure, and she was already towering on the wing, and far remote

from all the toils and dangers of mortality, before the attendants had discovered the preparations for her flight." There was a simple grandeur in his death that harmonised with the humility and dignity of his life, and the contemplation of both which might prompt the wish and extort the prayer of Balaam, somewhat altered, and far more complete, "Let me live the life of the righteous, and let my latter end be like his."

Such, then, was the history of the servant of God, for the embalming of whose memory we are assembled this day. As to his character, this it is as much beyond the power of his friends adequately to describe, as it would be beyond that of his enemies, if he had any, to injure. Few men ever departed from our world who left more admirers of his excellence, or fewer detractors from it. I have now known him half-a-century. Nearly eight-and-forty years ago, he preached at my ordination service. From the first, when I was not intimate with him, I regarded him with respect; and when admitted to the circle of his friends, and honoured with his confidence, I added the warmest affection to the highest esteem. I loved him more and more to the last interview, and parted from him, rejoicing that the friendships formed upon the basis of piety are to be renewed and perfected in heaven; and to be perpetuated through eternity. I claim not perfection for my dear friend while he was upon earth. I should, in imagination, see his countenance frowning upon me, if I did. He had enough of excellence to show how far it could be carried onward to that point even here; enough of human infirmity to prove that such a point is not reached till we arrive in heaven. Without the magnifying power of the microscope of censoriousness, perhaps you could

find out failings; but will you not join with me in saying, that they were like the spots upon the sun's disc, lost to the eye of all but the careful observer, amidst the flood of radiance upon which they floated, without obscuring it?

Consider what strong temptations, what heavy trials, what arduous duties, what complicated difficulties, viewing him as a man, as a Christian, as a minister, and especially as a popular preacher in this fashionable city, must of necessity have been crowded into those sixty-three years which he spent here. And to have been enabled, by Divine grace, to maintain, amidst the ardour of youth, his purity; amidst the vigour of manhood, his fidelity; and amidst the infirmities of age, his constancy; to have borne his popularity without being inflated by pride, or intoxicated by vanity; to have sustained with humility, yet without servility, the honours that were heaped upon him; and to have remained uncorrupted by that most corrupting snare, the caresses of the distinguished few, as well as the plaudits of the multitude; and after all this to go down to the grave with a Christian reputation unspotted by sin, and unassailed by calumny, as he did; who can know this without glorifying God, who had given such grace to man, and saying, "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation, for when he is tried he shall receive the crown of life, which fadeth not away."

It is not every man who sustains public excellence by a proportionate manifestation of the home and private virtues. The preacher is best known in the pulpit; the man, and the Christian, in the house. It is not always that the popular minister of the sanctuary is equally lovely and beloved in the domestic circle;

and, that when he has finished his sermon, in reference to which his fame has said, "Come and hear," he can, on descending from the pulpit, and returning to his own habitation, himself say, "Come and see." Mr. Jay could. His more than faithful, his chivalrous, attention to the companions of his pilgrimage, even when, in the case of one of them, mind and memory had fled; his tender, indulgent conduct as a father; and his kindness and winning behaviour to his servants, who does not know? His life was his best sermon (though his preached and printed ones were amongst the best and most excellent of his day), just because it sustained them all, and illustrated the whole circle of Christian doctrines and duties, and the whole round of social and domestic relations.

But we now turn to Mr. Jay in his public character as a preacher of the gospel. None need to be informed of his eminence in this capacity: and it was this that constituted his eminence. He chose the pulpit for his post, and like a wise, good, and faithful servant of his Lord, bent all his powers and employed all his studies to occupy it with effect, and in it to serve his Master. In an age like this, when such discussions have arisen about the power of the pulpit, it is well to contemplate the career of those who have been most successful in this department of christian activity, and inquire how they accomplished their object, both as to matter and manner, and whether the same matter and manner are likely to be successful in our age. Our venerable friend was, throughout his career, evangelical in sentiment; his theology was derived, as regards uninspired authors, from the writings of the Puritans and Nonconformists, modified and purified by a strict

comparison with the word of God, and exhibited with the polish which the graces of his style threw over it. He knew that the diseases of human nature are radically the same in all ages, in all countries, and among all ranks, and that the gospel is God's own remedy to meet and cure them in all times, all countries, and all conditions of society; and, therefore, this was his theme, when scholars, philosophers, senators, and nobles were among his audience. As Paul determined to know nothing at commercial, fashionable, and philosophical Corinth, but Jesus Christ, and him crucified, so he determined to do at Bath. In the exhibition of his clear, rich evangelism, he was experimental and practical, rather than doctrinal. He had seen the error, into which many of the preachers and authors, both among evangelical ministers of the Church of England and the followers of Whitfield, had fallen, upon the revival of religion, in being too objective, in their works and sermons, and he became prevailingly subjective, or rather, it might be said, he combined both methods, though with a larger proportion of the latter. Scarcely any one of his printed sermons contains a formal statement, proof, and defence, of any doctrine of the orthodox faith; it being his settled conviction, that controversy is for the press, not for the pulpit; for books, and not for sermons. He chose to let his theology flow as the life's blood of his teaching, the vitalising principle of his whole system of Christian morals and experience, rather than present it as a separate covering thrown over the whole, or even as a pedestal supporting it. In this he seemed to take the sacred writers for his model. Still, it may be questioned whether, in our days, the great verities of our faith should not be more

frequently brought formally into the pulpit, and wrought by all the force of scripture argument into the public mind. But while Christ was the great central truth of his ministry, you who hear me now, and heard Mr. Jay so long, can bear witness to the beautiful variety of subjects which he made to revolve round the great Sun of Righteousness, all taking their form from its influence and illuminated by its brightness. Though all related uniformly to the Saviour, and led either directly, or by easy and natural consequences, to the illustration of his offices, or to the exaltation of his personal glory, or to evince the infinite importance of his mediatorial work, he did not restrict his discourses to a few favourite topics, a fault so common to a certain class of preachers of his early days, and fostered too much by a certain class of hearers.

You know how he surprised you, from time to time, by his ingenious selection of texts which you had scarcely ever thought of, and delighted you by novelties of illustration with which the depth of his penetration, his various reading, his minute and perspicacious observation of nature and men supplied him. Did he not bring out meanings of texts, or make new, yet legitimate applications of them, which, though you had never dreamed of them before, your most sober judgments approved as soon as they were heard? People who read his printed discourses, or heard him occasionally, envied the privileged congregation which, from year to year, were favoured to hear those strains of evangelical truth, those clear elucidations of Scripture, those lessons of sacred wisdom, those rich consolations, those faithful warnings, those gentle reproofs, which such a preacher must deliver; sustained,

as they were, by such appropriate texts, enlivened by such jets of fancy, and beautified by such sparkling imagery, such full and well balanced antithesis, such exquisite illustrations, such strokes of pathos, such terse, pithy sentences, which often contained a whole sermon in a few words; and all delivered by a voice which was the soul of music, and spoke its words not only to the ear, but to the heart. No man ever more clearly proved that there is an eloquence in tones, and rhetoric in emphasis. What manner of people ought you to be who had this great preacher sixty-three years? He was no pulpit actor. When you came hungering, and asking after the bread of life, did he give you a stone of philosophy? or when you asked for a fish, did he give you a serpent of venomous controversy? His sermons were no mere fireworks, splendid and amusing, but useless. In his most elaborate preparations for public services, he had ever some great practical object before his own mind, and he kept it before the mind of his hearers. Those who came to hear Mr. Jay, expecting hard logical demonstrations, trains of abstract intellectualism, or deep philosophical investigations, would go away disappointed. But those who desired to have their understanding instructed by manly thought; their conscience enlightened by evangelical doctrine; their heart improved by right principles; their character crowned with the beauties of holiness; their power increased to resist the force of temptation; their endurance strengthened to bear up against the ills of life; their victory over the world made more certain, and their meetness for heaven more complete; and with all this, their taste regaled with poetic beauty; could never go from his sermons without saying, "This is preaching."

There was one excellence in Mr. Jay's sermons which was perhaps carried almost, if possible, to excess, and that is the abundance of scripture that he introduced, more generally for the purpose of illustration than proof. In this he was the opposite of Dr. Chalmers, who quoted scripture comparatively rarely. We are astonished at his acquaintance with the Word of God. He not only was never at a loss for a text, but for the text he wanted, and often displayed the most extraordinary felicity in the selection of texts for particular occasions.

It is a happiness for the world that Mr. Jay's usefulness was not confined to the pulpit. The press gives wings to thought. Books cross oceans, traverse continents, circumnavigate the globe, penetrate the wilderness as well as cities, and address millions who will never hear the living author, and when his voice has been for ages silent in the grave, speak to generations yet unborn. And thus, Mr. Jay will speak wherever the English language is known and as long as any shall remain who love to have their minds instructed with evangelical truth, and their hearts warmed with divine love. His name is a household word across the Atlantic, and many, both ministers and pious laymen from that quarter of the world, to my knowledge, could not return from a visit to the father-land, without undertaking a pilgrimage to Bath to see and hear the man whose works had contributed so largely to their spiritual improvement.

Few things did Mr. Jay more thoroughly hate than bigotry, and there are few in which we should have a more entire sympathy with him: and he hated it most of all in Nonconformists. Of some systems it is the

natural growth, a poisonous weed indigenous to the soil, but here it is an unsightly exotic. He was a conscientious dissenter, but not an angry or bitter sectarian. Had he chosen to conform to the Established Church, I do not say he would have made his way to the episcopal bench; but with his connection and admirers in the establishment, and his own popular talents, how near he may have approached it, we cannot presume to say. Had a mitre been offered him as the price of his conformity, I am sure it would have been declined with as much firmness as he refused a diploma when it was sent him from America in acknowledgment of his great merits as an author. But though a separatist he was not a schismatic: his conscientious and uncompromising regard to truth made him the former, while his charitable love of all good men kept him from being the latter. He was not only a minister of the congregational body, but a believer in the holy catholic church and the communion of saints. He loved the gospel as every christian man and minister of Christ does, far more than he did his system of church government; and though he held fast the latter with a hero's valour, and a martyr's grasp, it was never with a feeling that militated against the seraphic spirit of the former. He was, and it is saying all that can be said of any one, a beautiful embodiment of the two great principles in harmony, religious liberty and catholic unity.

Our dear friend could not be said to be a public man in the fullest sense of the term; if by that be meant a platform speaker, and an active member of the executive of our various religious organizations. Public he was as a preacher, as much so as the pulpit could make him; and very striking it was to see him, whatever was the

occasion or the cause, almost as much followed and admired when his sun was setting, as when it rose in all the splendour of its youthful attractions. But he never liked our religious stage, and therefore never trod its boards, and I am not quite sure he would have succeeded. He was one, who, as the prophet said, could play skilfully on an instrument, but his was the soft lute, and not the shrill trumpet required for the public meeting; and this was his own conviction. At the last public service but one in which I was united with him, when the thanks of the company were awarded to him for his sermon, he rose and said; "I am not going to make a speech; I have no platform gift, and I thank God I never had." We may add our gratitude to his; for had there been a taste for speech-making, his fine intellect might have spent too much of its time and powers in those coruscations of eloquence which, at our public meetings, blaze out and expire; and with the exception of much gratification, and some little practical effect, are lost for ever. And so we might have been deprived of some of those useful works which remain to bless the world and edify the church.

In his intercouse with his brethren, Mr. Jay exhibited no haughty reserve, no proud condescension, no patronising superiority, no airs of arrogance, no patriarchal authority. He was affable even to playfulness, yet he never indulged a familiarity which invited impertinence. He inspired reverence and at the same time conciliated regard. No one could take liberties with him, yet all felt easy in his company. Some men do not care to be loved so that they are feared. This is the temper of a demon. Others do not covet to be

feared so that they can be loved. This is the temper of a seraph. It is scarcely necessary to say which was the disposition of the subject of this sermon. If I were to compare him to one of the ancient prophets, it would not be to the vehement Ezekiel, nor to the lofty Isaiah, but to the plaintive Jeremiah: if to one of the apostles, to "the disciple whom Jesus loved," and who when leaning on the breast of incarnate love embibed so much of its own temper. Mr. Jay was a fascinating illustration of the apostolic phrase, "whatsoever things are lovely." Yet he could reprove those he loved. He did not scruple, on some public occasions, to rebuke sharply, and that not only the follies of the world, but those of his own brethren too. But if his rebukes had a sting, it was not that of the wasp, which can only sting, but that of the bee, which also gives us honey.

It was the completion of Mr. Jay's excellence that it was unattended by any eccentricities or extravagances, which either impaired or concealed it. He was original, and had peculiarities, but as they were innocent and harmless, and free from everything grotesque or ridiculous, they seemed no more than the decoration, or, at any rate, the fringes of his mantle. I once said to him, what a mercy it was to be kept from blots. "Yes," said he, "and from whims also." He sought and employed no artificial means of notoriety. His was not the popularity of eccentricity. It was no meteoric wild-fire that attracted attention, but the steady and useful brilliancy of a fixed and ever resplendent luminary.

Such was the great and good man whose loss this day we all deplore. Yes, he is gone! We shall see his

face, and hear his voice, no more, till we shall behold him, not as we last beheld him, pale with sickness, and racked with pain, but robed with light, and radiant with glory.

To the truly excellent woman who was blessed to be the wife of his old age, and has now the honour of being his widow, and who by her ceaseless assiduities in ministering to the comforts of his declining years, and in assuaging the pains of his last sickness, did so much to soften his descent to the grave, I offer my tender sympathy. To his children and his grand-children, I would suggest the consideration of the honor of being descended from such a sire, and the solicitude they should all feel to be reunited with him in heaven, and spend their eternity in the Father's house above; and to those of them who bear the ministerial office, I would say, Ever contemplate and seek to imitate the bright pattern of pulpit excellence, which you have had before your eyes.

The city of Bath has to mourn the departure of one of its holiest and best inhabitants. It was once its vain pride to boast of a man who officiated as the priest of fashion, and conducted the ceremonial of its gaieties and amusements. How much more fully may it value the honour of having been the residence for so long a time of one, who contributed his efforts to supply many of its visitors with more solid consolation than the rounds of folly; to throw over it so much of the beauties of holiness, and to conduct so many of its inhabitants to that glory which shall endure, when the fashion of the world has passed away for ever!

In the character of this eminent man what a model of ministerial duty is exhibited to his brethren in the

ministry, and especially to the younger portion of them. In him genuine piety was seen free from the gloom with which ignorance and superstition too often invest it, and arrayed in a cheerfulness which, in its most playful moods, never bordered on unbecoming levity. His extraordinary wisdom, which was one of the salient points of his character, was without cunning; and his unvarying prudence without coldness. His humility was free from affectation and obsequiousness; and his independence, from pride. His industry, which commenced in youth, left him not in old age. He never served either God or his church with that which cost him nothing, but carefully prepared all his public exercises, not only for great occasions, but for every Sabbath, and even for Monday evenings, when he sat in his chair, and, like a father surrounded by his children, delivered, in artless guise, the lessons of wisdom and experience. But there is one thing especially which our young ministry might learn from this bright example, and that is, by what methods to obtain both acceptableness and usefulness. Mr. Jay reached it by the evangelical strain of his doctrine, combined amidst all the other excellences of his preaching, with its beautiful adaptation to human nature, whether unrenewed or sanctified. It was intellectual enough for the most cultivated understanding, and yet simple enough for the most untutored. He thoroughly studied human nature, and the Bible in its adaptation to all its various phases. His pulpit history and success clearly teach that the road to popularity and usefulness lies over the Mount of Olives, where the Redeemer wept his tears over lost souls; through the garden of Gethsemane, where he agonised in blood; by the brook of Kedron, where he walked in holy medi-

tation; and close by the cross, where he made atonement for the sins of the world. In other words, he who would be useful in converting souls, as well as attractive in drawing together a congregation, must adopt as his theme the gospel of our salvation, and labour to the uttermost to set forth this, with all the earnestness of a persuasive manner, and all the graces of a simple yet elegant style.

It is not permitted me to address the people of his charge, for, literally speaking, he had none at the time of his departure. But both the congregations whom he left behind, were once, when united, the people of his love and of his care. Both respect his memory, even as both profited by his ministry, and are solemnly accountable to God for the use they made of it. May it be permitted me to hope, as it certainly is my duty to pray, that having so long assembled round his pulpit to learn the lessons of love and peace, they may be able now to practise them around his grave; and thus give another proof to the world of the power of religion to unite what is dissociated, and harmonise what is discordant.

We can profit by his living voice no more. In default of this, may we all now turn to those volumes which Mr. Jay has left behind as his richest legacy, in which he still lives, and by which, being dead, he yet speaks to us. May the young read again the Essay which offers to be their guide in the most eventful step of their lives. May the heads of families, if they need any assistance to sanctify their households by prayer at the domestic circle, breathe out their supplications in those appropriate forms which he has prepared for them. May the believer study afresh his duties and his privi-

leges in that excellent directory, "The Christian Contemplated." May the spiritually-minded have the flame of their devotion continually kindled by those inestimable "Morning and Evening Exercises." May ministers learn, from a reperusal of his Lives of Winter and Clarke, their duties and obligations. May our female population be instructed and improved by his forthcoming volume of Scripture Biography, which, prepared by him for the press on his death-bed, and presented to them by his hand stretched out by him from the eternal world, will be read with an interest increased by these affecting considerations. While all should study again, to advantage, those admirable sermons, which have long been in their possession, and consider them as preached from his grave, or rather from his seat of glory, and thus perpetuate his ministry as long as a page of his writings shall last. "I heard a voice from heaven saying, Write, Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord, from henceforth, saith the Spirit, for they rest from their labours, and their works do follow them."

THE CHARGE

DELIVERED TO THE

REV. R. W. DALE, M.A., AT HIS ORDINATION

TO THE

CO-PASTORATE OF THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

ASSEMBLING IN

CARRS LANE CHAPEL, BIRMINGHAM,

NOVEMBER 22, 1854.

My beloved young brother, and I rejoice to add, my co-pastor in the spiritual oversight of this Church, it is at your own request that I undertake the service which I now rise to perform. You are aware that I wished to decline it, not indeed from any want of affection for you, but from a consciousness that I do not now possess sufficient vigour either of body or of mind for such a task. It was my desire, if I took any part in the solemn transactions of this day, to have addressed the Church on the duties it owes to you. I had selected as the subject of my sermon the words of John the Baptist in reference to Christ, "He must increase, but I must decrease:" a passage of holy writ which, if my heart do not greatly deceive me, I could have adopted, not reluctantly, nor querulously, but with the consent of both my judgment and will. Provided you hold on your course in the cloudless splendour of unsullied purity, the majesty of truth, and the meekness of wisdom, I scarcely know the depth of obscuration into which I should not be willing to sink, for the furtherance of your usefulness and of the welfare of this Church.

There are two circumstances which, at any rate to myself, and I believe to my friends, give especial interest to the momentous transactions of this day. The first is that they occur after an illness which might have sent me to the tomb, and left you sole occupant of this

pulpit, and from which I am even yet but partially recovered. I thank God, however, that having obtained help, I continue unto this day, and am permitted not only to witness these scenes, but to bear a part in them. The other consideration is, that this ordination takes place in the jubilee year of my pastorate, and will constitute, even if nothing else should mark that event, an appropriate and delightful celebration of it.

In the selection of a passage to be the basis of my charge, I have been guided by a wish to find one which should express the relation in which we stand to each other, and the duties arising out of it, as well as the nature of our office and the obligations it imposes; and I could find nothing more suitable for that purpose than the apostle's words to the Corinthian church,

1 Cor. iii, 9.

We are labourers together with God:

or, as it should be rendered, We are joint labourers of God.

In these few words, viewed in connection with the context, are set forth, our office, our Master, our work, and our union.

I. Our official character.

The chapter from which the text is taken gives us a simple, explicit, and correct idea of the ministerial office, assigning to it sufficient dignity and importance to protect those who hold it from degradation and contempt; and yet by representing it as dependent and responsible, guarding them from pride, arrogance, and self-exaltation. "Who then is Paul, or who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed?" I need not tell you that the word "minister" signifies merely a servant; but then, minis-

ters are the servants of God. In that view of your office, there is everything to humble, and yet everything to elevate: it invests you with ineffable honour, while it declares you at the same time to be nothing. If there be sometimes a momentary feeling of humiliation, under the idea that we are but servants, that is immediately relieved by the consideration that we are servants of the eternal God, and wear the livery of him, in executing whose commands the highest archangel finds his honour and bliss: and that we are his servants, in working out the noblest purposes of his infinite mind, the most stupendous plans of his moral government of the universe.

I need not, my dear brother, caution you against those supercilious airs, that haughty demeanour, that priestly arrogance, and official pride, authority, and pomp, which have been, and still are, displayed by so many ecclesiastics, who lord it over God's heritage. If ever there should be a moment of inflation of mind in which you should be tempted to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think; if ever, in looking round on this large church, this public situation, this important sphere of action, you feel anything of the swell of ministerial vanity; may the good Spirit of God, in one of those gentle illapses by which he sanctifies his chosen, whisper in your ear, "Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but servants?" On the other hand, if at any time you are cast down, disheartened, and discouraged, under a sense of your own weakness, dependence, deficiency, and want of success; may that same Spirit send into your heart all the power of that mighty saying, "Our sufficiency is of

God." Oh the sweetness, the sanctity, the dignity, the encouragement there are in these few words, "I am a servant of the living God!" If the mightiest of them all must go through their career under the humbling influence of the consideration that they are but servants, the meanest may go through theirs under the elevating idea, that as the servants of God they may clothe themselves with omnipotence and enrich themselves with all-sufficiency.

II. Let me now remind you of your Master.

Servant and master are correlative terms. We are the servants of God, appointed by him. Every servant is formally or actually engaged by his employer. No one has a right to enter the house or field of another and do his work, except he be hired. This is as strictly true of the servants of God as of any other. The apostolical succession men are correct in their general principle of the necessity of a Divine appointment in order to the validity of the office of a minister, but they are egregiously wrong in its application. If they really believe that the validity and efficacy of their ministry depend upon its having been derived by an uninterrupted and undisputed episcopal line from the apostles, I wonder they should ever have a moment's respite from the fear that theirs is an unauthorised ministry: for we defy the whole order to prove in the case of any single clergyman whatever, by evidence which would satisfy any jury in the world, that there has been neither break, nor the introduction of a false link in the chain which connects him with the chair of St. Peter. No such fears haunt your bosom, my brother. You do not trace the line of your authority for doing the work of the Lord, back

through the papacy, but directly to God.* In your personal godliness; in your unbribed desire to labour for the glory of Christ in the salvation of souls; in your possession, according to the judgment of friends, of competent abilities for the work; in the call of this Church to take the oversight of them in the Lord; and in the conversion of souls already saved by your labours; you have credentials of infinitely more worth, and more to be relied upon as the signature of God and the seal of heaven, than a line of succession stretching back from the present day to the times of apostles.

As a servant works for his master and not for himself, you are to labour for God. You are hired to cultivate his field, and to build his temple, by the conversion of souls. Hear it, with fixed and solemn attention; hear it, on this momentous occasion; hear it, in the presence of angels, men and devils; hear it, before high heaven, and Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; hear it, and from this moment, never forget and never cease to act upon it; that God has called you to this special work of saving souls. This first, this midst, this last, is your service

* With reference to this passage the Author added a note at the end of his sermon in these words: "On reading over the Charge which I delivered to Mr. Dale, I find there a passage, which on a calm review of it, I would wish obliterated, as being neither in good taste, nor written with that courtesy and candour which I would ever wish to maintain in dealing with such a subject, I mean that which occurs in page 44, and refers to the doctrine of Apostolical Succession. Let that whole paragraph be considered as expunged, for whatever of truth it may be supposed to contain, it is not expressed in words of charity." The Editor has notwithstanding this retained the passage, because he could not see that any one could with reason be hurt or offended by it; and he has omitted only one phrase, and that related to the papacy.

for God. Let this stand out before you with all the distinctness and grandeur of the pyramids before the eye of the traveller, and let your soul be carried towards it, by a law as fixed as that which carries water down a declivity. O beware, beware, of living for self, of preaching self, of seeking self. Self-seeking is the besetting sin of our office; and to conquer it is one of the most difficult things we have to do. Self is the idol of the pulpit, of the study, of the platform. None are more in danger of seeking the praise of man, or of being greedy after human applause, than we. O, what a horrid and compound felony is this self-exaltation, to employ not only the talents Christ has given us for his own glory, but his very doctrines, his agonies, all to exalt ourselves: to use his very cross as a pedestal for self, and his very groans only as a means to sound forth our fame! Let us not thus rob our master, and invest ourselves with the sinful spoils. My brother, if you are a man of God, as I believe you are, it will be your wish, your prayer, and your labour, to turn your eye and heart God-ward, and not self-ward; to live for God and not for self; to preach Christ and not self; to be content to act only as a mirror, which, while it exhibits the glory of Christ that falls upon it, is lost in the splendour of what it reflects.

A servant is a responsible and not an independent agent. This is strictly true of us ministers. Our responsibility to God is awful, and is sufficient to make an archangel tremble if invested with our office. We are charged with the highest and most momentous interests in all the universe. We are put in trust with the gospel, with immortal souls, with the church of the

living God, with the honour of Christ, the glory of Jehovah, and the moral destinies of the globe.

"'Tis not a charge of small import
The pastor's care demands;
But what might fill an angel's heart,
And filled a Saviour's hands."

And think you, my brother, that for the manner of discharging such a trust, there must not, will not, ought not to be, a rigid account given in to the great Master? Yes, and though not a severe, he is a strict Master. He will be more strict with Christians than with pagans, with professors than with mere worldlings, but strictest of all with us ministers. We shall find in the day of judgment, that there was an omniscient eye which followed us into the study every time we sat down to write a sermon, and saw every line upon our paper, and every motive of our hearts; an eye that followed us into the pulpit, and watched every kindling desire, every drowsy feeling, every wandering thought, every desire for fame. "Ah, my dear brother, when we hear from the right hand of the Judge songs of bursting praise that we ever had existence; and on the left behold a company of wretched spirits, sending forth their loud lament that we had not warned them with a stronger and more impassioned voice; shall we not regret that all our sermons were not more intensely earnest, and all our prayers more agonising. Behold among the crowd that are gathered round the tribunal of Christ, that shape more deeply scarred with the thunders of divine vengeance than the rest, around which a thousand dreadful beings with furious eyes and threatening gestures are venting their enraged curses; it is an unfaithful pastor, who went down to the pit with most of his congregation,

and there around him are the wretched beings whom he decoyed to death. My soul turns away, and cries, Give me poverty, give me the curses of a wicked world, give me a martyr's stake, but O my God, save me from unfaithfulness to thee, and the souls of men."

> "All to the great tribunal haste,
> The accounts to render there;
> And shouldst thou strictly mark our faults,
> Lord, how shall we appear."

Yes, my brother, "we speak the literal truth in the plainest language when we say, that in view of this responsibility faithful pastors sometimes feel their office a burden almost too heavy to be borne. The onerous weight of souls almost crushes them to the earth, for there is an awful sense in which souls lie in the hands of men who have been put in charge of them by the Almighty. Pastoral responsibilities cannot be an ordinary thing; cannot be taken coolly. The pastoral office is the wildest extravagance, or it is the most solemn and weighty of human thoughts. The pastor holds a commission, which to hold and to be careless while holding it, furnishes one of the darkest proofs and the most awful manifestations of human depravity. For the times in which we live, we need a self-consecrating spirit in the ministry, a yearning over souls, a wrestling with God as in Gethsemane, to know how we shall wring out for this time, and this land, and this strangely agitated people, their eternal salvation. How, how, shall the ministry be clear in their great office, if they are not influenced by a fresh outcoming upon them of the mighty presence and power of God the Spirit; if they are not baptised with the Holy Spirit and with fire? There ought to be at such a time as this a striving and upheaving within the

entire church; while especially the ministry should come forth with the word of the Lord like fire in their bones, so to speak to the heart of bewildered humanity as that it may see and know God." And if we always lived in sight of the judgment seat, and preached every sermon as if we were to go straight from the pulpit to the presence of the Master, to the scrutiny of his eye, and to the testimony of his voice; we should then by our conduct verify the statement, that he maketh his ministers a flame of fire.

III. Let me now present to you your occupation.

We are labourers. Ever since the fall the earth has been full of labour. It is the condition of lapsed humanity. "In the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat thy bread." And indeed, it is only excessive and exhausting labour that in man's sinful condition can be considered a curse; nor would it be possible to conceive of a heavier malediction to fall upon any one, than to be doomed by an irreversible sentence to absolute and perpetual indolence. Those favoured few, as they are thought to be, who by their rank or their riches are exempted from all exertion, have no reason to be thankful for their privilege. It was the observation of this necessity of some labour which led the ancients to say, the gods sold us everything, but gave us nothing. Men would become brutes for the want of something to do, rather than philosophers from the possession of absolute leisure. All nature is full of action, and an idle man is a disgraceful exception to the works of God. What then shall be said of an indolent minister of Christ! If labour should be proportioned to the greatness and difficulties of the objects to be achieved, what vigorous effort, what untiring energy, what hardy endurance are

demanded and necessary for the greatest and most difficult work in the universe? Your work, my brother, is identical with that for which the Son of God became incarnate; to which he devoted the energies of his whole life upon earth; to which he gave his miracles, his sermons, his prayers, his tears, his agony, his cross. Your business is to work out the problems of eternity; to carry forward the designs of Christ's mediation, which are to fill immensity with glory, and eternity with praise. Infinite and everlasting issues depend upon your occupation. Look at the cross of Christ: your work is to give the Redeemer of the travail of his soul that he may be satisfied. Look down into the bottomless pit and see the torments of the damned: your work is to save immortal souls from coming into that state of eternal perdition. Look up into heaven and behold the glories of the redeemed: your work is to raise immortal souls to that ineffable felicity. Look into eternity and dwell upon its interminable succession of ages: your work is to start immortal souls in a progression of knowledge, holiness, and happiness, all but infinite, through all this endless duration. Look abroad upon the moral condition of mankind, all under the curse of a violated law; all possessed of a depraved nature; all devoted to sin, to folly, or to worldliness; all going the downward road, and unwilling to be led out of it; all careless about salvation, in love with sin, and unwilling to be saved: your work is to beseech them to be reconciled with God, to have compassion upon them, to lay hold of them, and with fear to pluck them out of the fire. Look into your Bible and behold its wondrous, and in many cases its mysterious, contents: your work is explaining and enforcing all these sublime and glo-

rious revelations. Look into your church and consider all those various characters to be guided, governed, fed, harmonised. Who that reflects upon this will ever dream that the pastorate is a sinecure, or a light and easy occupation. There are too many, I admit, who in their own case reduce it to this; who are looking only to their own way, every one for his gain from his quarter. But, to use the quaint language of the prophet, they are dumb dogs: they cannot bark; sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber. Of faithful ministers it may be truly affirmed, that though not included by popular opinion among the laborious classes, they are the most laborious class in the United Kingdom. Holy Baxter was once taunted by his enemies with idleness; though one should have imagined he was the last man to be reproached with this. He meekly replied, "The worst I wish you is that you had my ease, instead of your labour. I have reason to take myself for the least of all saints, and yet I fear not to tell my accusers that I take the labour of most tradesmen in the town to be a pleasure to the body in comparison with mine, though I would not exchange it with the greatest prince. Their labour preserveth health, mine consumeth it; they work in ease, and I in continual pain; they have hours and days of recreation, and I have scarce time to eat and drink. Nobody molesteth them for their labour, but the more I do, the more hatred and trouble I draw upon myself." Ah, my brethren, though we distantly retire from Baxter's mighty shadow, unable and unworthy to draw near to such a man, yet some of us in our measure can say, "Death worketh in us, but life in you." It is not improbable, that had the duties of the pastorate here been less laborious, he who has for so many years dis-

charged them, had appeared in the pulpit this morning in a less exhausted and enfeebled condition. But if the patriot warrior finds himself reconciled to premature decay and feebleness by the recollection that they were brought upon him by fighting in his country's cause, and sees on this account a glory radiating from his scars, how cheerfully may a minister bear those infirmities which are the fruit of labour and not of indolence.

When, my dear brother, I reflect on all that we have to do, I am ready to say that a minister is the last man in the world who should allow himself to think that he has a moment to waste, or an energy to spare, for any thing else but his own immediate occupation. Surely, surely, in none do negligence and indolence acquire such deep shades of cruelty and guilt. And in such a view of things as this, it seems to me as if we were all loiterers together, and that "a workman who needs not to be ashamed" were a character nowhere to be found, now that the Whitefields and the Wesleys are gone to their rest. During my late illness and seclusion, I have been looking back upon my life, and examining it afresh at a time when I thought it possible it might be coming to a close; and oh, the humiliation I have felt before God, for the imperfect manner in which my ministry has been discharged. How solemn, how awful a thing has it appeared to have to lay down the ministry I have received from the Lord, to give an account of my stewardship, and be dealt with myself for the manner in which I have dealt with immortal souls. If, instead of being old, I were young like you, my brother; if, instead of drawing to the close of my ministry, I were like you commencing it, it seems to me as if through the most protracted period of ministerial life, and amidst all the

attractions of literature, science, and philosophy, all the charms of domestic delights, all the powerful influence of public life, I should never get out of the sight, the sound, the spell of those weighty words, "They watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they might do it with joy, and not with grief." Be then, my dear brother, a labourer in the fullest sense of the term. Begin this labour in your closet with yourself. To keep our own personal godliness up to its proper standard, as it is the first, so it is the hardest, but most necessary work we have to do. It is from the minister's defects, viewed in the light of a disciple, that his chief official dangers and difficulties arise. If the heart be right with God, it will keep all else right. It is in the closet, no less than in the study, that we are to prepare for the pulpit. We should all be better preachers, if we were better Christians. They speak best for God who are most with God.

A minister's religion should not only be sincere and unsuspected, but eminent and conspicuous. True, there is no other nor stricter law to regulate his conduct than such as binds the conscience of his people also. But there are reasons why he should be more tremblingly anxious to conform exactly to the common rule. The people will make him their standard of holiness, their pattern of Christianity. They will hardly expect, or wish, to be above his attainments. If his standard of personal religion be low, it will make theirs still lower. It is not only his preaching, but his habitual temper and spirit, that will form their religious character. He is always acting upon them. His general intercourse with them, his conversation at their tables, in their circles, and when mingling with them round their fire-sides, according

as it is either light, trifling and frivolous, or serious and devout, will produce an impression deeper than his sermons. He is not, indeed, to be a type of religious gloom, to assume an official character, nor perfume himself hypocritically with the odour of sanctity: the inmates of the house are not to consider his visit as the appearance in their habitation of a spectral form before which the countenance pales with fear, and every smile of joy, and every sound of mirth is banished, as too profane to dwell in a presence so ghostly. By no means; he is ever the messenger of glad tidings, the minister of peace, the herald of bliss. But then he is ever also, and everywhere, the man of God, the minister of Christ, the watchman of souls. He may, he should, sometimes drop his office and be merely the personal friend; but never should the inscription, "Holiness to the Lord," be effaced from his character. How eminently devout, spiritual, and heavenly should be that man who is to inculcate these dispositions upon others. How remote from all that is sinful, worldly, or trifling, should he be who is to lure men from all that is low, and sordid, and earthly, and lead the way. How careful should he be, not only to come out and be separate from all that is really sinful, but from everything that has the appearance of evil. How constant and how close should be his communion with God. How devoted should he be to the holy exercises of the closet. I dare say it seems to our hearers, an easy matter for a minister who has so much to do with religious matters, to keep up his own personal godliness. That, however, which appears to them our advantage, constitutes our difficulty. How much vigilance and effort does it require to make that a matter of individual and personal application, which is pursued as our pro-

fession. Hence, perhaps, none are in greater danger of self-deception as to the spiritual state of their souls than ministers. Fervour and fluency in prayer and preaching may be mistaken for high spirituality, when in fact they may be nothing more than the excitement produced by the publicity amidst which they are performed. Then will God send forth his seraphim to touch our lip with a coal from the altar, when we have seen his glory and humbled ourselves before him. I would not be censorious, but I am afraid that the present race of ministers is not eminent for personal godliness. This, perhaps, can be explained, if not excused: our public services are so numerous, so incessant, and so urgent, that our closets are neglected, and yet we cannot live upon our own public services. We are in perpetual bustle. We sigh for more retirement. We want leisure for meditation, for self-examination, for prayer. The Roman Catholic priesthood have their seasons of retirement from the duties and cares of office, in what they call their retreat, when they review afresh their functions and come forth braced and invigorated for action. Would God we could have something of the same kind. And why could we not? Seasons of fraternal intercourse, not to eat, to drink, to smoke, and to gossip; but to pray together, to admonish one another, and promote each other's personal godliness, would be of essential service.

Labouring thus in the closet, how well would you be prepared to work in the study: prayer will not hinder research: the highest degree of spiritual life is compatible with the highest degree of intellectual excellence. He that purifies at the fount of heavenly grace the vision of his soul from the scales of sin and worldliness, will

be better prepared to discover the form and beauty even of general, but especially of divine truth. Be a labourer then in your study. We can do nothing without this at any time, much less in such times as these. To keep our ground, and maintain our influence, we must read much and think more. We must be abreast with society in its advanced position. On whatever the shades of ignorance gather, it must not be on the pulpit.

Labour in the pulpit, not by such an excess of elaboration, as to make yourself unintelligible to the mass, and even unwelcome to the judicious few. Despise the clamour and the cant about intellectuality, so common in these days among certain young men and young ladies of our dissenting body. Yet be intellectual, in the highest and best sense of the word. But let your intellectuality consist, not of metaphysical abstractions, abstruse discussions, speculative novelties, or religious sentimentalities; but of manly thought, strong sound sense, scriptural exegesis, expressed in good Saxon language, and devoted to the elucidation of God's holy word, for the salvation of immortal souls. Consider the pulpit as your scene of labour, not the lecture or committee room. Do not sink the preacher in the lecturer. Lectures themselves are becoming a drug. They form with many a cheap and easy way of getting knowledge, though very little indeed is gotten in this way by those who substitute hearing for reading, and lectures for books. It may be well enough occasionally to aid in the communication of general knowledge, but some of our ministers are going too far in this line of action. There are men and books enough to teach science. Our aim is above, though not against, science. We labour for souls, for immortality, for Christ. And

labour, my brother, labour, to the last energy of body and mind, for those bright and eternal objects. It is surprising, when we come to reckon it up, how much time is devoted by ministers to various modes of moral reform, physical improvement, the preparation and delivery of lectures, orations, and other things, which however valuable, are not their particular work. Seek for souls, watch for souls, labour for souls, wherever they may be found. Nor in pursuit of this object, confine your labours to the pulpit, follow the stricken deer to the thicket, and seek to heal the wounds you have inflicted by your sermons. Be found in the class room. Draw round you the young, especially young men. Be known in the sick chamber, and in the house of mourning, as the comforter of the afflicted. Be ambitious to be a labourer, and not merely to have the reputation of being one. You have but one life, and if that life were as long as Methuselah's, the object of your ministry would justify your labouring for it to the last moment of those nine centuries, how much more through this short uncertain life of yours.

IV. I come now to consider our union.

Our association is in the work of the ministry, we are labourers together. I an old, you a young one, are labouring side by side in the same field, or on the same scaffolding. Not only are we associated with all other ministers in the holy catholic church, who are building the one great temple of the Lord, but we are now the joint pastors of this church. Yes, my beloved brother, in this public and solemn manner, I hail you, I welcome you, as my co-pastor in the oversight of this christian community. You have not been imposed upon me by a church tired of the effete labours of their aged pastor,

and longing for a change of administration. You are my own choice as well as theirs; theirs at my recommendation, and mine as cordially as theirs. Come then, and share with me the labours, the anxieties, the hopes and pleasures of the pastorate of this church. Co-pastorates have not, I know, been always happy. Hence the dread of them by many aged ministers. That ours may be an exception to the failures, is my most earnest prayer, my pleasing hope; and I will now state what appears to me to be necessary to the realization of that desire.

Our object must be one, we must both seek the same thing; for "how can two walk together except they be agreed?" And what is that one object, on which our eye must in each case be fixed? The spiritual welfare of this church. You and I must have no personal interest, no separate party of our own attached to us, and we to it. The church, the whole church, in all its varied members and interests, must be regarded by each of us as our joint concern. To build up this church by the conversion of sinners, and the edification of believers, must be the one thing uppermost in the heart of each of us. There may, and should be, division of labour and action, without division as to ultimate object. And each for the promotion of that object, must be prepared not only to labour, but to make little sacrifices of individual predilection and feeling. When men come into confederation of any kind, they surrender to each other a portion of their individual liberty and freedom of action. If each can forget himself in the well-being of the church, can forego anything, or do anything, or yield anything but principle for its peace and prosperity, our union will be happy and useful. I make no boast

of my attachment to this church, though I thus publicly avow it. Fifty years have been spent in building it up. All its members save one, have been brought in during my pastorate. I must love it, I ought to love it, and God is witness how much I do love it; and it is my intense regard for its welfare, that has led me to seek this association with you; and if by laying down my office, I thought I could promote its well-being, I would resign to-morrow, and leave you in sole possession.

While we must seek the same object, we must, if we would labour usefully and comfortably together, seek it by the same means: that is by the full and faithful preaching of the glorious gospel of the blessed God, and the exhibition of all the great doctrines and incumbent duties of the christian system. We may not always be of one mind as to the meaning of particular texts, or the fainter shades of theological opinion; but we cannot work together if there be disagreement upon fundamental points. Nor perhaps, shall we always think alike on modes of christian or ecclesiastical action. In such cases a difficulty will present itself, arising from a conscientious and honest desire to preach and teach what we deem to be truth, and a strong and just repugnance to exhibit two opposite teachings. A little forbearance and prudence however will carry us through this perplexity. It is one of the difficulties which must ever attend a co-pastorate. The same pulpit should not give out from time to time clashing and contradictory views, even on subjects of inferior moment. And does not the fact that they are of less consequence, suggest the propriety of maintaining silence on, at least, some of them? And where conscience dictates the necessity of introducing others, we shall both of us, I believe, take

care that it be done in a modest and inoffensive manner; a manner free from dogmatic boldness and controversial asperity. It would be quite unseemly even for the aged pastor flatly and rudely to contradict the junior; perhaps still more so for the junior openly and pertinaciously to oppose the senior. Our private intercourse with each other will greatly assist us in this matter; and by the free and candid exchange of thought we may in most things, settle down in the same conclusion.

You and I must preach the same gospel, the one gospel, for there is but one: and the good confession you have made before many witnesses, proves the harmony of our creeds. We are destined to hear much in our day about new lights. May we not expect to hear next of new lights for the material heavens? Certainly a new sun to rule the day, a new moon to rule the night, and a new pole star to regulate the mariner's compass, are quite as necessary, as a new gospel to convert the world. Some appear to be growing tired of the old gospel which was from the beginning, and which was designed to be God's method for saving souls, through all ages, and all countries, and in all states of society; and seem to have an inclination to repeat the unsuccessful experiment of ancient Greece, to do that by philosophy, which can be done only by the preaching of the cross; and depend upon it, the next generation will have to repeat the former testimony that "The world by wisdom knew not God." Intellectuality as it is called, is a poor substitute for the simplicity that is in Christ: and philosophy a miserable succedaneum for the gospel of our salvation. We hear much about the adaptation of preaching to the times in which we live. Why the gospel is from beginning to end, God's adapta-

tion to fallen humanity in all its phases, from the savage to the sage; and like the light of the orb of day, or the air we breathe, it is not one whit less adapted to the man basking in the meridian sunshine of science, than to him who is groping amidst the thickest gloom of barbaric ignorance; though of course it may be presented to the one, in a manner somewhat different to what it may be to the other. What we want, my brother, is not a new gospel, but the old gospel, exhibited with new power: the doctrine of the cross in all its sublime and simple grandeur, lifted upon a higher pedestal of biblical science, by men of more eminent piety, more apostolic zeal, and of profounder intellect. But there are some, who though they would not be thought to abjure the cross as the theme of their preaching, hang around it so much of philosophical terminology and cast of thought, as to hide its own divine and simple glory from public observation. They do not, they say, repudiate old doctrines, but only old modes of presenting them. But then, the dress of these received truths is with them so much in the fashion imported from the continent, or set forth in the pages of Thomas Carlyle, that the members of our congregations scarcely recognize their old favourite truths, and mistake them in their new habiliments for heresy, and run from them as horrid shapes of error; while perhaps some of the younger ones hail them as the harbingers of a new and intellectual era of Christianity. I am no advocate of a stereotyped cast of thinking, or of a set of religious phrases; but God forbid that I, or any of us, should be ashamed of the words which the Holy Ghost teaches, any more than we are of the doctrines which these words are intended to convey. Scriptural doctrines must be taught in

scriptural language. And when, for the sake of novelty, we abandon the latter, we shall not long retain the former. The mode of representing scripture doctrine, which did satisfy Luther, Calvin, Knox, and Cranmer; Whitefield and Wesley; Hall, Chalmers, and Jay, and which does satisfy the most successful preachers of this day; which has wrought all the great spiritual revolutions of the world, may, one should suppose, satisfy us, without resorting, when speaking of divine truth, to a phraseology, which is half the language of Ashdod, and half the language of Canaan.

May I appeal for a moment to experiment and to fact, as supplied by this congregation and its senior pastor. What displaced here the former small sanctuary where your fathers worshipped, and reared these capacious walls? What has filled this large place of worship to the very doors with listening hearers? What has gathered a church here of nearly a thousand members? Not high scholarship, not philosophy, not what some would call high intellectuality. No, for the preacher pretends to little of all this: but the simple, yet earnest preaching, in language which the people could understand, of the two great themes of redemption and regeneration. Fifty years experience and observation have taught me, in addition to the teaching of the Bible, that if sinners are to be converted, and a revolted world is to be brought back to God, it is still to be by preaching of these same great doctrines of redemption and regeneration. And it is my anxious hope and prayer, that you, my brother, will be a labourer together with me in the inculcation of these truths, and thus build up with me the temple of God. Genius, eloquence, eccentricity,

and oratory, may attract notice, become popular, and collect crowds, but it is the doctrine of the cross alone that will become the power of God unto salvation.

But our union should extend to the spirit in which our joint labours are to be carried on. We who have one object, and one means, must be baptized by the Holy Ghost into one spirit. As regards our conduct towards our divine Lord, this must be a spirit of entire devotedness, self-consecration and dependence. We must not rely ultimately upon each other, but both together direct our believing reliance and expectation to that divine agent, without whom ten pastors would do nothing. We must look to the Spirit of God, not only for the success of our ministry, but for our own harmony. Co-pastorates have not been always, or even often, harmonious ones. Let us, my dear brother, be brought into a state of sweet affiance on the Spirit of all wisdom, grace, and love, for the preservation of that unity of sentiment and feeling, which have so happily characterised the commencement of our connexion.

But when I speak of unity of spirit, I more particularly refer to our conduct towards each other. And how shall we best preserve our harmonious co-operation, and avoid those schisms which have sometimes disturbed and divided the co-pastorate? I answer, first of all, by a spirit of affection. If every true christian in this church should be united by the cords of love which are the bands of a man, how much more should this apply to you and me? If the church is to esteem us both very highly in love for our works' sake, how much more should you and I esteem each other. Let the thirteenth chapter of the first Epistle to the Corinthians, be the

basis of our union. If I am worthy of it, love me with filial affection, and I will return it with a paternal one.

It must be a spirit of confidence. Confidence in each other's piety, zeal, aims, motives, affection, and generous attachment to each other, and devotedness to the church. A confidence which will divest us of all suspicion of each other's intentions, and make us absolutely sure that we are seeking no private and personal ends, but each other's usefulness and the good of the church: a confidence that cannot be shaken by the reports of the talebearer, the insinuations of the slanderer, or the fulsome praise of the flatterer. In every church, especially in every large church, there will always be found some weak people, and some who are more wicked than weak, who will parasitically contend for the favouritism of one of the pastors, by depreciating, in a covert if not an open manner, the other. We must despise such parasites, and never receive a compliment at the expense of each other. In the progress of our union, little things will occur, quite unintentionally, which may seem to trench upon each other's rights, dignity, and duty, and to indicate a want of regard for each other's feelings. It is so in the conjugal union. There never was a couple yet in our world, however sincere and ardent their love, and entire their union, who had not something to forbear with in each other. But genuine love is forbearing; and the strong affection of man and wife does not allow their confidence in each other to be shaken by every little unpleasant incident, light as the breath of air that makes the aspen leaf to tremble and quiver. Our confidence must resemble theirs.

Connected with this and allied to it, is a spirit of candour and frankness. As regards the church, there are to be no secrets between us. Let us suspect the person who comes to either of us, with a something the other must not know. Nothing is more likely to shake our confidence, than the disclosure of facts, concerning both, which one has concealed from the other. If we work pleasantly and usefully we must, shall I say, to use a common phrase, be bosom friends. In all joint labours, there will be occasionally individual action that will require explanation. Let each anticipate enquiry, and without waiting to be asked, furnish all necessary information. In any case, should such arise, when the mind of either is wounded, or hurt, or surprised, or perplexed, by the conduct of the other, let us never brood in silence over the matter, but in the spirit of loving, gentle and generous confidence, solicit explanation.

Reciprocal helpfulness is of course essential to our comfort and success. Yes, my brother, we can help one another. I cannot surely have spent fifty years in this world, and town, and church, without acquiring some knowledge, experience and discretion, which may be of service to you, and most willing and happy shall I be ever to afford you the benefit of my experience. Should there at any time be in your pastoral conduct, or even in your mode of preaching, what does not appear to me to be for edification, you will not be offended if, in a spirit of love and gentleness, I point it out to you. I shall never assume the dictator, and you will not refuse to accept the offices of a counsellor. If in this way I may be able to help you, in how many ways you may help me! Even had my health continued as it was, you could have materially assisted me to bear the burden

of the oversight of this large church: how much more now that sickness has enfeebled me, and made me perhaps prematurely old! In addition to the performance of many pastoral duties, such as Bible classes, attention to the schools, or visiting the sick, which I can scarcely now discharge at all, and which I never did discharge to any great extent, you by your kind personal attentions, your cheering presence, your animating words, your readiness at any time to supply any lack of service, can dispel those fears, and alleviate those anxieties, which gather like dark evening clouds around the spirit of an aged and infirm minister, and can thus help me, with greater comfort and energy to carry on such services as I may be able to perform, for such length of time as God may continue me in his church.

Need I say we shall require each other's sympathy. The pastoral office, my brother, is an honourable, but it is an arduous one. I would not exchange my pulpit for the loftiest throne on earth. Engaged in the work of glorifying God, honouring Christ, and peopling heaven by the salvation of immortal souls, I envy not the crown of the monarch, the laurel of the conqueror, or the purer wreath of the poet, artist or philosopher. But honours cast their shadows of care, solicitude, and sometimes of agony. I have known the pleasures of the pastorate, but I have known its trials too. If, like our Master, we have our Tabor, like him we have our Gethsemane. Fruitless sermons, unanswered prayers, disappointed hopes, inconstant friends, inconsistent professors, backsliding inquirers, ingratitude where we might expect acknowledgment, cold indifference where we might look for warm-hearted affection; and all this followed by a painful apprehension of a want of useful-

ness, lying like a dead weight upon the spirit, cause many a bitter hour in the pastor's history, and prefer a just claim for sympathy. And if we have not all the sympathy we might desire and expect from our flocks, just because they do not know our sorrows, let us not be wanting to each other. My dear brother, tell me the sorrows that any time oppress your heart. Bring me your official distresses, for depend upon it you will have some, and you shall never find they are told to a listless ear and an unfeeling heart. You shall have my sympathy in full measure. But it is I that will stand in greatest need of tender consideration. The contrast, which it will be impossible I should not sometimes myself draw, and which it will be equally impossible I should not know that others will draw, between age and youth, feebleness and vigour; the consciousness I shall possess of failing energy and growing decay, attended as it will be with the comparison of my present self with my past; the evidence, or at any rate the fears, I may have of a preference of some, which even the most delicate regard for my feelings will not be able altogether to conceal; the perception that late sowings of the seed of the kingdom are often fruitless ones, will give me, my brother, a claim upon your sympathy and that of the church, which I am confident you will neither of you be backward to yield. And yet by God's grace I may perhaps stand less in need of this, than in some gloomy moments I am ready to apprehend. And shall we sympathise only in sorrow, shall we only weep with each other, and not rejoice with each other? Be assured that every thing which gladdens your heart will gladden mine. I have rejoiced, I do rejoice, and I shall rejoice, in

your great acceptableness with this congregation. They need not fear to love you, or to show their love. It will awaken no jealousy in my mind. They are too good, too wise, too generous, too grateful, to allow themselves out of regard to a young pastor, to slight an old one, who has served them for half a century. They have hearts large enough to find ample room for us both. If not, and it be necessary that one of us must be displaced, then, provided they will promise to love you, and behave to you for fifty years as they have done to me, should God spare you so long, I will make the greatest sacrifice I could, next to losing the favour of God and my children, and retire, with the consolation that my loss is your gain, and that at least there is one heart, even that of Christ, in which I can never lose my place.

I have no time, nor is it necessary, to direct you to those sources of encouragement and help which are so abundant in the Word of God. There is, however, one topic apart from this, to which before I close I will advert, and that is the sphere in which you are to exercise your ministry. I do not now refer to the town in which you are to labour, but to the church over which you are ordained. It was my happiness, fifty years ago, to receive an invitation both unanimous and cordial to become its pastor. That happiness is now repeated to you, with this augmentation, that the unanimity in my case was only of about forty members, in yours it is that of nearly a thousand. And may we not look upon so extraordinary a oneness of heart and mind as a sign from heaven, an indication of the will of God? It is not, however, the numbers only that I refer to, but to

their character. Half a century's acquaintance with them has enabled me to form an accurate estimate of this, and I eagerly avail myself of the present opportunity to bear it, in justice to them, and for your encouragement, a public, willing, and grateful testimony to their social and religious excellence, and to their generous and loving conduct towards their minister. Turning for one moment to them, I would say, fifty years of unvarying love and respect, of undisturbed harmony and unimpaired confidence, have bound you to my heart with cords stronger and tighter, I am ready to think, than those which have united other pastors and their churches. And what I ask, all I ask (and I cannot ask for more), on behalf of my dear brother, is, that you would behave to him as you have behaved to me; and then he must be the most unreasonable man on earth if he is not satisfied, grateful, and happy.

Such are the people among whom you, my brother, have cast in your lot, and among whom you are come to live and labour in connection with myself. That connection, I trust, will never be broken but by the death or hopeless infirmity of the aged pastor: and one or the other, or both of these events, may not be very remote. The seventieth year of life gives out to him a caution not to calculate on many years yet unspent, and a solemn warning to anticipate the end; and when, as in my case, the constitution of three-score years and ten, in addition to long and arduous labour, has received a shock of disease, it becomes a man to think seriously of his giving up his stewardship. Long after my memorial shall be added to those which are inscribed on yonder marble,* may you occupy the pulpit over-

* The monument of the former pastors, set up in the chapel.

shadowing my tomb,* and send forth over my sleeping dust the words of life and immortality. A long, a holy, and a useful career be yours in this place. As it was in my case, so may it be in yours, and this church be your first, your last, your only love. Even longer, more happy, and more useful may you be here, than I have been. Rich in years, in honours, and in usefulness, may you come at some far distant day to your end: and then after labouring in the same pulpit, come and lie down with me in the same grave, at the foot of it: so shall we resemble warriors resting on the field where they fought and conquered. Then shall we rise together from the same spot at the resurrection of the just, go up together to the bar of our divine Lord, and hear him say to each, "Well done, good and faithful servant;" and hand in hand together, "enter into the joy of our Lord." What will then remain for us, but to spend a blissful eternity together in the presence of God and the Lamb, surrounded by the fruits of our exertions, and the manifestations of our usefulness, as the joint labourers of God.

* There is a large ministers' vault under the clerk's desk, in front of the pulpit.

SERMON

PREACHED ON

SABBATH MORNING, SEPTEMBER 9, 1855,

ON THE

COMPLETION OF THE FIFTIETH YEAR OF THE AUTHOR'S PASTORATE.

With what solemn, joyful, grateful feelings, above those which are usual with us, do we this morning ascend the hill of our Zion. No such occasion ever has before occurred, none such, to us, ever can occur again. Fifty years ago this day, reckoning by the day of the week instead of the day of the month, I preached my first sermon as the settled minister of this congregation; and having obtained help of God, I continue to the present time. Our thoughts, feelings, and gratulations blend now in sweetest unison, and must flow in one channel; and it is my business, by the selection of a subject, to mark out their course. And could I find anything more appropriate for the occasion than that one comprehensive and emphatic word which Samuel inscribed on the stone he set up at Mizpeh? Ebenezer. Nothing certainly can better express my own feelings, and perhaps nothing could more emphatically express yours. Be this then the text:

1 Samuel vii, 12.

Then Samuel took a stone, and set it between Mizpeh and Shen, and called the name of it Ebenezer, saying, Hitherto hath the Lord helped us.

The occasion of this memorial was a great deliverance which the Israelites received from the power of their enemies, the Philistines. This triumph was granted by

a special interposition of Jehovah on their behalf; and granted in answer to earnest prayer. God must be acknowledged in all our mercies, and it is delightful to be able to see in them the answer of believing and fervent supplication. This is our duty and delight on this memorable day. Whatever cause we have this morning, as a Christian church, when looking over the past fifty years, for congratulation and joy, we adopt the language of the Psalmist, "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory." "It is the Lord's doing, and is marvellous in our eyes:" and I feel tremblingly anxious that whatever is said or done on this occasion, God alone should be exalted; for he is "a jealous God, and his glory will he not give to another." How much more lofty and sublime does anything appear when it is recognised as the work of God, than when it is considered merely as the work of man.

And then what we have this day to celebrate has been done in answer to prayer. Is it the life of the pastor that calls for joy? Behold in that the answer of believing supplication. Seven and thirty years ago, he was brought as near to the grave as any one ever was without descending into it, when a very extraordinary spirit of prayer was poured out upon the church for his recovery, and he was restored again to health and usefulness. From that time may be dated the principal part of whatever success has been granted to him, both as a preacher and an author. Only a year ago, his life seemed again threatened, and he was once more restored in answer to your petitions.

Is it the progress and prosperity of the church you celebrate? These too are the fruits of believing supplication. Your fathers, long since gone to their rest, when

the cause was reduced almost to ruin and desolation, prayed in sorrow, yet in hope, for its revival and its strength; and from their time to the present, there have not been wanting those who, looking above man to God, have wrestled with him for his blessing upon their pastor and their church. I love to contemplate in the happy events of this day, the power of God and the power of prayer. I love to see God's work and glory standing out in bold relief upon the page of our humble history.

We are told that Samuel, in order to preserve the memorial of the events to which the text refers, and to encourage future generations to trust in God, took a stone and inscribed upon it this one compound word, Ebenezer, which means, "the stone of help." Visible and durable memorials of illustrious events have been the practice of all nations in all ages. Men have loved to hand down to coming ages a permanent record of occurrences in which they bore a part, and which they desired posterity also should know and remember. Oral tradition is a treacherous mode of communication, and therefore they have set up commemorative reminiscences in wood, or stone, or brass, or books, of scenes in which they took themselves a deep interest, and which they wished that others should take an interest in too.

You have deemed a peaceful and successful pastorate of half a century worthy of commemoration, and are about to add deeds to words. Some visible and lasting memorials of this event are about to be raised, and upon each and all let our piety and our gratitude inscribe the blessed word, Ebenezer.

In the discourse of this morning, let us first consider what we have to record. This will lead us to take a brief review of the history of our church as well as of

the present pastorate, and though some of these matters have on a former occasion been recited,* when I took a review of the forty years of my ministry, yet their repetition now will not be unseasonable nor unwelcome.

This church, as most of you know, and have been often told, was formed in the year 1748, by a separation from the congregation assembling in the Old Meeting House in this town. That place of worship was originally occupied by a Trinitarian congregation. At length an Arian minister was chosen, and then many of the members, having protested in vain against the choice, peaceably withdrew and founded this church, of which Mr Gervas Wilde, an earnest popular preacher, was the first pastor; he after sixteen years of successful labour was cut off in the midst of his days. He was succeeded by Mr Punfield, a good man and sound divine, but dull and uninteresting as a preacher. During his ministry, which lasted about twenty-three years, the congregation continually declined. The next pastor was the Rev. Dr. Williams, one of the greatest theologians of modern times, who after three years and three quarters resigned his charge, to become Principal and Theological Professor in the Dissenting College of Masbro'. Although so profound a divine he was not popular as a preacher: and the congregation did not considerably increase. Next came the Rev. Jehoiada Brewer, whose commanding appearance and powerful address so greatly augmented the number of hearers as to render a new place of worship necessary; he preached however, but one Sabbath in it, and then in consequence of some misconduct, withdrew, with a large number

* In a sermon, printed as a narrative, under the title of "Grateful Recollections." Ed.

of his friends, and founded a separate church, which met for worship in Livery Street Meeting, and subsequently in Ebenezer Chapel in Steelhouse Lane. This last mentioned place of worship was erected for Mr Brewer, but he died before it was completed. At the separation this congregation was reduced to a very low ebb, and passed through a season of severe trial. The pulpit was occupied for several months by Mr. Joseph Berry, whose family and ancestors have stood connected with this congregation from its commencement to the present day. After his retirement the Rev. James Bennett, then of Romsey, Hants, now the venerable Dr. Bennett, of London, came with his bride on their wedding tour to Birmingham, and preached with so much success to the congregation as to receive a unanimous and a cordial invitation to become their pastor. Upon his declining to accept it, he recommended a youth then studying for the ministry at Gosport, under Dr. Bogue, and who at that time was not nineteen years of age. In August, 1804, that youth came to Birmingham, merely, as he thought, as a temporary supply, certainly with no expectation of being chosen as the pastor of the church. His preaching met with the acceptance of the congregation, and after four Sabbaths, before he left the town, a deputation waited upon him from the church to invite him to become their pastor, as soon as he might be permitted to leave college. With, perhaps, too little reflection, and a promptitude that savoured more of boldness than of prudence, he gave at once a favourable answer to their invitation. He does not now know at which most to wonder, their precipitancy in giving the invitation, or his own in accepting it. Results have proved that it was of God, but circum-

stances at the time argued little for the wisdom of either party. What a mercy is it that prescience is denied to mortals, for could that young man, when he accepted the invitation of the church, have foreseen the fifty years of labour, success, and comfort, that were to be allotted to him in this place, it might have produced in so youthful a heart a vanity which would have had an injurious effect upon his character and his career. That youth is now before you, the man of three score years and ten, the sapling has grown into the oak, under the branches and in the shadow of which you have long reposed, till the oak itself is in a state of decay.

But to return to the narrative. After another year spent at college, I came to settle as the resident minister, and preached my first sermon on September 8th, 1805, from these words, "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these ye might be partakers of a divine nature." I have a very clear and vivid recollection of the impression of awe which I received on my first survey of the congregation from the pulpit; it was produced, not by the number of the hearers, but by the unusually large proportion of venerable, noble, and may I say, majestic old men, who sat around me, waiting for the message of the juvenile preacher. I now wonder how I could open my lips on that occasion, and can account for my getting through my sermon only by thinking that the Lord helped me. The congregation consisted of about one hundred and fifty persons, and the church of forty four members. My ordination did not take place till the 8th of the following May, and of all the ministers then engaged, (among them were Drs. Williams and Bogue, and Messrs. Jay and Bennett),

not one survives except the venerable octogenarian whom we expect to hear next Wednesday morning.* At that time, and for nearly ten years afterwards, in consequence of the schism which had rent the congregation, there was no intercourse between the congregations or pastors of Carrs Lane and Ebenezer Chapels. What a blessed change has long since taken place! Now the intercourse is so fraternal and the communion so sweet, as to compel us to exclaim, "Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity." For the first seven years of my ministry, I met with but small encouragement, although during that period I preached thrice every Sabbath: so that had a favourable opportunity presented itself, it is probable I should have removed to another sphere of ministerial labour. And my history affords a caution to young men, not to be too soon discouraged, and not too hastily to strike their tent and depart. Taking into account the size of the congregation, I do not know that my preaching was ever more blessed for the conversion of souls, than it was then. But it did not attract the multitude to the chapel. Various causes may be assigned for this, the place was uncomfortable, though so recently built, much unworthy effort was made to prejudice the public mind against the congregation, as people who had dealt severely with their pastor, and perhaps it may be added, and confessed with shame, the young minister did not take all the pains he should have done with his pulpit preparations. At length, when the congregation began a little to increase, it was determined to alter the chapel, by erecting side galleries and rendering it more comfortable. During

* Dr. Bennett. Ed.

the alterations we worshipped in the Old Meeting House, which was most obligingly granted us for two services on the Sabbath, and the congregation there altering their time of service to accommodate us. This gave us publicity, and when we returned to our own place it was crowded, and every sitting taken, even those in the table pew. From that time to the present the tide of our prosperity has never ceased to flow. The movement was of God, who saw the time to favour us was come.

The demand for accommodation increasing, the congregation with a spirit, boldness, liberality, and unanimity, which excited our astonishment and our gratitude, determined upon the erection of a new chapel: and the present noble structure was raised, at a cost of nearly £12,000. It was opened in September 1820, when the Rev. Dr. Fletcher, then of Blackburn, preached in the morning, and Dr. Bennett, in the evening. During the erection of the new place of worship, the congregation of Ebenezer Chapel kindly accommodated us by granting us the use of their spacious building at an early hour in the morning, and the Unitarian congregation of the New Meeting House lent us their place in the evening. So large an undertaking tries the temper of a people, and that must be good if they can maintain in such circumstances the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. God gave us the harmony we prayed for, and with one accord, and one mind, we took possession of our new chapel. During the last few years of our occupying the old one, the church kindly released me from the afternoon service, which was conducted much to their satisfaction by the Rev. John Berry, the father of Mr. Joseph Berry, already mentioned. He was

followed by Mr. Richard Adams, one of the holiest men that ever lived; and he, by Mr. Thomason, who proved, after he left us, one of the wickedest. The afternoon service was then altogether given up, a practice which now generally prevails, but is, on some accounts, to be regretted, since there are many persons who can attend only in the afternoon. Little has occurred during the last thirty years, to interfere with one uniform even course of tranquillity and success.

About five years ago, finding myself growing old, though by no means infirm, I began seriously to think of having an assistant or co-pastor. Having observed the divisions which the choice of a pastor has sometimes occasioned, I always felt an intense anxiety about this matter in reference to my own church, an anxiety which I carried to God in constant and earnest supplication; and I can truly say, that for years I never entered this pulpit on a Sabbath morning, without a silent petition for divine grace to guide the church in the choice of my successor, and to preserve its unity unbroken, and its harmony undisturbed. It was also my desire that I might be allowed to assist them in their selection. I never had the dread of a co-pastorate, which many aged ministers feel, for I believed God would, if I asked it in faith, give me grace to keep down those imperfections of even our renewed nature which render somewhat difficult the harmonious co-operation of two co-ordinate authorities. I have sometimes feared that my anxiety about the peace, love, and harmony of my church was excessive, and bordered on distrust in the wisdom, power, and grace of its divine Head. Peace has ever been the object of my almost painful solicitude and earnest prayer. I could never hear of two of our members

disagreeing, without some anxiety lest the little undulations of the disturbed surface should spread wider and wider. And of course, when my mind was fully made up to advise the church to choose a co-pastor, I could not but feel most deeply about a matter of such immense importance to my own comfort, and the present peace and future welfare of the church. We have all, I believe, made this great concern the subject of our most anxious, earnest wrestling with God. And how wonderfully, how graciously, has he answered our prayers, in the perfectly unanimous and cordial choice, the happy settlement, the abundant entrance, and successful labours of my excellent and esteemed co-pastor. Ought we not to take a stone, set it up, and inscribe upon it, Ebenezer? O my God, I thank thee that thou hast relieved my mind from the weightiest burden of my pastoral solicitude, and given me, amidst the gathering clouds and growing infirmities of my old age, one more spring of sacred consolation.

Let us now review the whole course of these fifty years' history, and see what reasons we have for wonder, gratitude, and joy. May I, without unpardonable egotism, refer to the pastor? Has his life been, is it still, of any consequence to the church? Even his own modesty, which is most unaffected, will not allow him to doubt this; and he is sure your over-estimate of his service will not allow your kindness to suspect it. Then here is some cause for thankfulness. How many who started with him in his career have long since finished theirs; and how few have even approached to fifty years; and how much fewer still are those who have spent their jubilee with the church where they commenced their labours. He knows but of three in

the denomination to which he belongs, who have laboured half a century among the same people. Yes, and there is another and more abundant source of gratitude, and that is the rich grace which has so preserved his christian character and reputation, as still to retain the respect, affection, and confidence of not only his own flock, but of the public. Very early in my ministry I met with that incomparable charge to a minister, by Abraham Booth, entitled "Pastoral Cautions," which was of more practical value to me than half the books I ever read; in it occurs the following passage: "Of late I have been much affected with the following reflection. Though, if not greatly deceived, I have had some degree of experimental acquaintance with Jesus Christ for almost forty years [I can say nearly sixty]; though I have borne the ministerial character for upwards of twenty-five years [I can say fifty]; though I have been, perhaps, of some little use in the church of God; and though I have had a greater share of esteem among religious people than I had any reason to expect; yet, after all, it is possible for me, in one single hour of temptation to blast my character, to ruin my public usefulness, and to render my warmest christian friends ashamed to own me. Hold thou me up, O Lord! and I shall be safe."* This passage I have never forgotten: it has been written as upon my heart; and if in any measure I have been preserved, and it would be an affected humility to doubt it, I owe it in no small degree, under God's grace, to the deep impression and vivid recollection of this awful contingency. The fall of a minister

* I earnestly recommend every young minister, yes, and every old one too, to procure, read, and pray over this wise and admirable concio ad clerum. It ought never to go out of print.

of any denomination into sin, is an occasion of deep lamentation and woe to the whole church of God. Nothing so hardens the hearts of sinners, or gives such occasion for the triumphant taunts of infidels as such an occurrence. The enemies of religion involve the whole order in the disgrace of the individual. Hence the language of the apostle, "Giving no offence in anything, that the ministry," not merely the minister, "be not blamed." If then in any case God preserves a pastor for fifty years, blameless and harmless, amidst all the temptations to which his office peculiarly exposes him, it is a special cause of thanksgiving, which is rendered still stronger by the instances of delinquency which but too often occur.

And then, whatever he may be in this or other respects, your minister is still yours. He has seen all the pulpits of the town, both in the Church of England and among Nonconformists of all denominations, change their occupants, and some of them many times. He stands amidst his working brethren their patriarch.

If he may now advert to his relative, as well as to his personal history, he is quite sure he shall be thought to introduce no irrelevant matter of consideration, no unworthy subject of recollection, nor undeserving theme of gratitude, if for a moment he refer to those women who, while by their conjugal relationship they graced, cheered, and illuminated his domestic circle, at the same time, by their example, influence, and activity, may be said to have "laboured with him in the gospel," by counselling him in his difficulties, cheering him amidst his discouragements, and ministering to him in his sickness. A minister's wife cannot be a negative character in a church, and must exert a powerful influence over

that one mind and heart, on whose feelings and decisions, on whose tranquillity and clearsightedness, on whose freedom from distracting cares, and disturbing thoughts, so much of the welfare of the church depends. How soon may she by her petulance and her prejudices, her suspicion of slight, or her complaints of injuries, disquiet her husband, or by her imprudences embroil the church! How much of uneasiness may she produce by officious meddling in anything, or by a cold and haughty reserve which touches nothing! How much may she do for the honour of her husband, as a wife, a mother, and a mistress, by presiding with wisdom and order over her domestic establishment; or how much for lowering his dignity by letting down hers! How much of the prosperity we this day so gratefully celebrate we owe under God to those two eminent women we have had and lost you may probably conjecture, and I certainly know, and I should deem it an injustice to their precious memory and my own feelings of love and respect for it, if when looking back on the fifty years I have spent so happily, and I believe so usefully, among you, I passed over in silence those who contributed so much to both.

I may next advert to God's merciful dealings with us in regard to our deacons. Every one knows how much the comfort of the minister, and the peace and prosperity of the church, depend upon the character, qualifications, and official conduct of these. In this matter we have been greatly blessed. We have never been without men who enjoyed the confidence of both pastor and people. Seven or eight times have I presided over the election of these office-bearers, a frequency perhaps never granted to any other minister; and, never

in a single instance, was the election the cause of any uneasiness or dissatisfaction. Nor has there ever been among the deacons themselves, or between the deacons as a whole, or any one of them and the pastor, any disagreement or want of harmonious co-operation. We, at any rate, have had no one who sought or wished to be a "lord deacon," or who was "the patron of the living, the bible of the minister, or the wolf of the flock." They have been my counsellors, without being my dictators; my friends, without being my partisans; my comforters, without being my flatterers; my helpers, without being my masters. I cherish with love, esteem, and gratitude, the memory of those of them that are gone to "the congregation of the dead;" and I possess the same feelings for those that are still, happily, in the congregation of the living.

In reference to the church, I bear public and grateful testimony to their uniform kindness, respect, and deference for, and confidence in, their pastor, during the fifty years of his connection with them. Whatever personal or relative afflictions it has pleased God to send into his house, or upon his person, in the uninterrupted and unwearied affection of his flock, he has found a balm for every wound, an antidote to every sorrow. They have wept with him when he wept, and rejoiced with him when he rejoiced. And he can truly say, that at this day, he feels that he has far less to forgive, than to be forgiven: and whoever may complain of the faithlessness, fickleness, and inconstancy of their flocks, he can speak with gratitude of the constant and stable regard of his.

The strifes, contentions, and divisions of our dissenting churches have been for a lamentation and woe to

themselves, and for a reproach and an objection against their principles, by their opponents. That such things exist can neither be denied nor concealed. They were found in the churches planted and superintended by the apostles, and it is no wonder, however much it may be regretted, that they exist in ours. They are the tax which poor imperfect humanity pays for liberty; for where there is freedom of thought, choice, and action, diversity of opinion must be expected; and diversity of opinion, with such hearts as ours, too often produces collision of feeling. How great then are our obligations to the Giver and Lover of Peace for the tranquillity which has been granted to us for the long period of our connection. What a cause and a call for gratitude is it, that during half a century we have never had one divided or even troubled church meeting. There was first of all the choice of the pastor; then the various erections of our chapel and school-rooms; then the seven times election of deacons; then the formation and support of our various and numerous institutions; then the admission of perhaps nearly two thousand members; then cases of discipline, some of them of a delicate and difficult nature: all these occurrences, spreading over so extended a duration as half a century, and involving the unbiassed opinion and the unfettered action of so many persons, all of them, however renewed and sanctified by grace, containing much imperfection in their nature; and yet, the harmony of the church has never been broken by a discord, nor its love ever divided by a schism. Why, brethren, what can we say—but that it is the Lord's doing, and marvellous in our eyes? "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name we give glory." Can we,

however, while we acknowledge this to be the gift of sovereign mercy, and give the honour and praise to God, can we, I say, without claiming any merit to ourselves, think of anything in the order of means, which God has disposed us to employ, and which he himself has blessed, for this happy state of things? Perhaps we can.

From the commencement of my pastorate, I have been duly aware of the peril of division to which our church polity exposed us, as is the case with every system of popular government: and I have at the same time felt, as I have already said, an excessive, almost an extreme, dread of division, and have with this sensitiveness, most cautiously watched and prayed against everything which could lead to it. I have endeavoured, and to a great extent, by God's blessing, succeeded, in making peace between discordant brethren. I have, in my closet and my study, sought for the things which make for peace. I have dwelt much in the pulpit, during my ministry, on the grace of love, as my volume on Christian Charity can testify. The influence of religion on temper has been constantly brought before you; I have made it a practice to interrogate candidates for communion on their constitutional tendencies of this kind. I have done all I thought proper to inspire confidence in the pastor and the deacons. I have considered it prudent to repress much speaking at our church meetings. In all these things, I have been encouraged and upheld by the intelligence, the approval, and the confidence of my people. They appear to have considered the peace of the church to be a most sacred deposit, committed to each member's care and guardianship, and for which each was responsible to God.

While gratitude is, with us all, the appropriate and predominant duty of this Jubilee season, a duty which I trust we are prepared with willing hearts to discharge, there is another feeling justly demanded by the review of the past, and that is, humiliation. At any rate, I feel it belongs to me. When I consider what are the demands upon, and the obligations of, the ministers of the gospel; when I dwell upon the value, the danger, and the salvation of immortal souls; when I consider what Christ has done for their salvation and what he requires his ministers to do; when I read the biography of some devoted servants of our Lord; I confess I am abased and confounded before God on account of my innumerable imperfections and shortcomings; and though I dare in some humble measure to adopt the language of the apostle, and say, "I take you to record that I have not shunned to declare unto you the whole counsel of God, and am clear from the blood of all men;" though I can say, if my heart and memory do not deceive me, I have never kept back what I deemed to be truth, nor refrained from denouncing what I knew to be sin, from the fear of any man's frown, or from the desire of any man's smile; though I am bold to appeal to you, as my witness, that I have not sought yours but you; though I am not conscious of having intentionally neglected the poor to caress the rich; though I believe I cannot be charged with having lorded it over God's heritage; yet, it is impossible for you, with the generous over-estimate you have formed of my labours, ever to imagine, or perhaps to believe, the profound and most abasing sorrow with which the retrospect of these fifty years fills me, and from which there is no relief but in looking, by faith, to that mercy seat before which you

prostrate yourselves, with the prayer and the hope of forgiveness. And now, when the labours and the success of half a century rise up before me, I can truly say, I have a far deeper sense of my need of pardoning mercy, than when, at the outset of my ministry, I looked over the feebler efforts of my inexperienced mind. So deeply am I now impressed with a sense of my imperfections, so heavily does it weigh upon my mind, that I have been sometimes ready to conclude that by me at least, this season should have been observed as a fast rather than a festival.

That I have not been altogether an idler in the vineyard of the Lord, the volumes which his grace has disposed and enabled me to write, as well as the various public services abroad, in addition to the ordinary ones at home, will perhaps testify: but, oh, now when the sands of my glass are fast running out, and only the last evening hours of my day remain, and those filled with the gathering infirmities of old age and disease, how much more diligent do I see I could have been, and penitentially wish I had been. And if there be one department of ministerial action on which I look back with a deeper regret than any other, it is the sphere of the pastor, as distinguished from that of the preacher. I must here, in the most solemn, public, and emphatic manner, protest against an opinion too commonly held, and too often exhibited in ordination services, and sometimes inculcated by senior ministers, and theological professors, that we ministers have little or nothing to do with visiting our people. If, by visiting the people, they mean dinner or evening parties, (but these they do not mean, for they allow them, though one of them consumes time enough to pay half a dozen pastoral

calls of a right kind); if they mean gossiping, lounging, story-telling visits, I quite agree with them, that this is not our calling, and ought not to be our practice. We have no time, and ought to have no inclination, for such profitless calls as these. But for such visiting as implies an oversight, inspection, and care of the flock, if we have not time, it is because we do not want it, and do not seek it. I would not have the pulpit neglected, the most careful preparation must be made for this, nor would I have the study forsaken, nor general literature overlooked: but the flock of Christ must be fed, watched, inspected, and dealt with according to their individual condition. And I do therefore charge myself this day with some culpable omission of my duties as a pastor. True, a large church scattered over the whole wide expanse of this populous town, the occupations of authorship, the demands of public institutions, frequent calls from home, an extensive correspondence, so oppressively increased by cheap postage, might be admitted, and I do offer them, as pleas in extenuation of my omissions of pastoral duty; but as a reason and justification I reject them, and cast myself for pardon on the mercy of a loving and forgiving church, and the mercy of a still more loving and forgiving God. I feel, my beloved flock, as if I had not dealt with you as you deserved to be dealt with. You have been the most patient, as well as the most loving, of churches. And what adds to the pungency of my reflections is that I cannot now make up for these omissions of past days. Age and its infirmities are upon me. I can neither walk nor ride far without inconvenience. May I express a hope that my beloved colleague will not only be a better preacher but a better pastor than I have been: and may

it not be said of him, as I fear it has often been said of me, not in querulousness but in sorrow, "My pastor never calls to see me;" and when at some distant day he shall review (may it be of fifty years!) his pastorate, may he not have the consciousness which troubles me amidst all the joyousness of the season, that I have too much neglected a people who deserved other and better things at my hands.

II. Let us now consider with what views and feelings our stone of memorial should be set up, and this expressive word, Ebenezer, inscribed upon it.

1. With sincere piety. "Hitherto the Lord hath helped us." The achievement and glory of the deliverance which the Israelites had experienced, and the mercy which they had received, were ascribed entirely to Jehovah. It was his right arm that had gotten them the victory. He thundered from the heavens, sent panic into the hosts of the Philistines, and made them an easy prey to the Israelites. True it is, my brethren, nothing miraculous has occurred among us, nothing out of God's ordinary method of procedure; but yet our happy circumstances this day are as truly, and, to my eye, as clearly, the result of his power and grace, as if they had been accomplished by a series of miracles. I see God's hand in everything that has been done here. He sent me, he kept me, he sustained me, he blessed me. If I have met with acceptance, and have been crowned with usefulness, it is the Lord's doing. Not a sinner has been converted, not an enquirer directed, not a believer edified, not a mourner comforted, not a troubled spirit restored to tranquillity, but by his grace. If we have been kept in peace and harmony, stimulated to activity, and favoured with increase, it is by his gracious

interference. "Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase." Entering fully, deeply, and practically, into the meaning of these impressive words, let us in looking back upon the past fifty years, and round upon our present circumstances, exclaim, "What has God wrought." "It is the Lord's doing, and is marvellous in our eyes." We may see and acknowledge instrumentality; we may perceive adaptation, for though God is a sovereign, and omnipotent, he works by appropriate means. But he is himself the Author and Giver of that very adaptation. The gifts and graces of ministers are as much his work, as the successful application of them in the conversion of sinners. Brethren, I beseech you look away from the human instrument to the Divine Agent. If an apostle could say, "I am nothing," and God is everything, how much more does it become us to make the same humbling acknowledgment. If in his zeal to glorify his Master he thus called himself a nonentity, how much more should we. Do enter into his exhortation "Let no man glory in men." The God we serve I repeat is a jealous God, and will not give his glory to another. Oh, do not lift up your pastors into the form and seat of "the image of jealousy which provoketh to jealousy." I have never trembled more for the honour of Christ than I do at this moment. If some ministers have had to complain of being under-estimated and neglected, my complaint is of being over-estimated and too much honoured. I cannot be ignorant of your opinion of me,

affection for me, or gratitude to me. I know what you are preparing, to do me honour, and I am alarmed lest our Master should be in any degree neglected or forgotten. I cannot endure the idea that you should rob God of his glory to invest me with the sinful spoils. I can accept no honour which belongs to Christ. Fifty years have I been endeavouring to exalt your ideas of Christ, and it will be a sad evidence how little good I have done you, if your attention is now more taken up with the instrument than with the Divine Agent. To ascribe the honour and power of a work of grace to ministers instead of God the Spirit, is about as irrational as it would be to give praise and glory to the pen with which Milton wrote his immortal poem, instead of giving it to the sublime genius of the bard himself. O let me be forgotten as far as possible, and Christ only thought of.

2. This expression, Ebenezer, must be uttered by us, as it was by Samuel and the Jews, with adoring wonder. When they saw the completeness of their deliverance, and dwelt upon the wondrous mercy they had received, they could not but exclaim with the profoundest surprise, "What has God wrought!" And those of us who know all the history of the fifty years which we are now reviewing, have almost equal cause for astonishment. If when I first entered the pulpit of the former chapel the prophetic Spirit had disclosed to my youthful eye a pastorate of so much usefulness, comfort, and duration, it would have appeared only as the baseless fabric of a beautiful vision, which could have no reality in my history. Ah, my brethren, you may sometimes be surprised, but you cannot wonder as I do. You know me not as I know myself. You cannot form an ade-

quate conception of the disproportion between the work done, and the instrument by which it has been done, as I can. It is well our hearers do not altogether know us, or perhaps their estimate of us would be somewhat lowered. I rejoice that there is one Being in the universe that knows me altogether; I rejoice that there is but one. I am a firm believer in the sovereignty of God in the dispensation of his favours. "He hath mercy on whom he will have mercy;" and if Scripture and Providence did not convince me of this, my own history would. Adoring wonder then is a most appropriate feeling with which to raise the stone and inscribe upon it our Ebenezer.

3. Can joy be absent or unsuitable on this occasion? Impossible! At least on my part, and I believe on yours. On a Jubilee festival, joy is the most appropriate state of mind which can be indulged. I must be a stock or a stone not to be filled to overflow with emotions of delight. To be alive, to be still a minister of Christ, to be alive, and a minister in such a church, and with the review of such a period and such a history, must excite, ought to excite, feelings of pleasure absolutely ineffable. To rise in this place, surrounded, as I now am, not with empty pews and a skeleton congregation, not with blank looks and cold hearts, not with scenes of desolation, and the bitter fruits of disappointment, not with sad proofs that I have lived too long for the welfare and welcome of the congregation, thinking with more pleasure of my tomb than of my pulpit, and therefore too long for my own usefulness and comfort; but on the contrary, to rise amidst a full chapel, a large and prosperous church, a people whose affection is stronger and fuller than that with which they

welcomed me among them half a century ago, and blessed with a colleague in reference to whom I may say if this were my last sermon he would fill my place, all this must make my cup of joy run over. Yes, and I believe that my joy is yours. Our souls are in unison. I am confident that you rejoice in what God has done for this church, and in not having to say

> "Her dust and ruins that remain,
> Are precious in our eyes."

No, dear brethren, this was said by your fathers in the low estate of our Zion. Yet, in the confidence of hope they added the other couplet,

> "Those ruins shall be built again,
> And all that dust shall rise."

Sainted spirits of our ancestors, how would you rejoice, could you look down from your celestial abodes, and see in what God has done, the answer of your prayers and the fruit of your tears and labours.

And what joy must fill your hearts, whom God during this period has called out of darkness into marvellous light, by converting you to himself. "Ye were as sheep going astray, but have been brought back to the shepherd and bishop of souls." How much must you rejoice whose children have been converted to God and are now travelling by your side on the road to glory. And ye whom God has established in his ways and comforted amidst all the trials of life, and conducted by the ministry of the word here, so far onward to his heavenly kingdom, must not you swell the chorus of praise? Could we see as God sees it, all the wonders of his grace collected in one view, all the faith, hope,

love, joy, peace, and holiness, which for fifty years have been streaming down from the fountain of life on this spot, and making glad this city of God; with what transport should we lift the commemorative stone, and say, "Hitherto the Lord hath helped us."

4. A sense of unworthiness should make our gratitude the more intensely fervent. Had ever a congregation such a demand upon their thankfulness as comes this day upon us? Thanklessness in us, would have a darker shade of criminality than often enters into the conduct of man. When we consider that we owe all to God, that he is the Alpha and Omega of all our prosperity; that it is his hand which has bestowed all our personal, domestic, and social blessings; with what intense and glowing thankfulness should we ask, "What shall we render unto the Lord for all his benefits towards us?" What a comparison could we institute, not only between our circumstances and those of a sister church in this town, so severely tried during the past fifteen years, and still mournfully feeding, amidst our tenderest sympathy, in pastures without a shepherd, not only between our circumstances and those of many other churches, but between our own present condition, and some former periods in the history of our church. It is observable that the stone was set up by Samuel, where, twenty years before, the Israelites had been smitten before the Philistines. The former breach was thus completely healed, and the grief and shame of a former defeat were lost in the joy and glory of a present victory. If gratitude should be in proportion to the number, value, repetition, and long continuance, of favours received, what should be our thanks for fifty

years' mercies such as have been granted to us? If we should hold our peace, the stones of the street might be expected, if they could be vocal, to break forth and utter against us the language of reproach. There is a debt of gratitude we owe to each other. I am sure I feel under deep obligations to you for a thousand kindnesses; for the sincerity, the fervour, the fertility, and the constancy of your affection, and it is my delight, as well as duty, thus publicly to acknowledge it: and perhaps you may find out some little debt of thankfulness you owe to me. But we must lose sight of all this, in the ten thousand times greater debt of gratitude we owe to God. The kindness of friends is of God, it is his own kindness at second hand, the overflowings of his love filling their hearts, and diffusing itself through them until it reaches us. With what an emphasis then should we now join in one universal chorus of hearts, and pour forth our gratitude in the language of the Psalmist, "Bless the Lord, O our souls, and all that is within us bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O our souls, and forget not all his benefits towards us."

With such sentiments and feelings, my beloved flock, let us this day erect our monumental pillar and inscribe upon it our Ebenezer. But there is one more idea suggested by the inscription, and that is an implication that we as much need Divine help for the future, and are as much encouraged to expect it, as in the past, but that yet it is somewhat uncertain, whether (through defect or misconduct on our part,) we shall have this Divine assistance continued to us. "Hitherto the Lord hath helped us." Ah, that "hitherto" is replete at once with encouragement and caution. Hitherto! What, will

it stop now? Are we to look for no more help? Has the orb of our prosperity reached its highest altitude? Has it touched its meridian? Is it now to decline? Shall we sorrowfully witness its decadence? Has the cycle of joy run out, and is that of sorrow now to commence? Is the sun of my long summer day to set in cloud? Or is that of my beloved and excellent colleague to be the luminary only of a short, cold, winter's day? We trust not, hope not, pray not, believe not. God is all he has been, and will be all he is. He that hath helped us, will help. Unlike human benefactors, he intends one mercy as a plea to ask and a ground to hope for more. Giving doth not impoverish, nor withholding enrich, him. His arm is not shortened, nor his ear heavy. He loves to be asked, and trusted, for future blessings. We honour his all-sufficiency by large expectations. Brethren, be hopeful for the future. My young brother, be hopeful for the future. You have reason to be so: but let us be dependent, and look above men to God. While you give due honour to the servant, let it not be by robbing the Master of his glory. As for myself, I need, and I expect, help for the remainder of my course. I depend upon Christ more entirely than I did the first sermon I ever delivered. As for your affection I believe it will never be withdrawn from me, as long as I deserve it. Blessed be God, not the smallest cloud of fear from this source flits across my evening sky. Amidst the gathering infirmities of old age, I have never had, I cannot have, a suspicion that they will render me burthensome to you. I have given to you the ardour of my youth, and the vigour of my age, and now offer you all that is left to me, the feeble-

ness of declining years, and I am sure you will accept it. I have that entire confidence in your regard and respect, that makes me think I shall be ever welcome in this pulpit, even though I should be carried into it, and though, like the apostle John, I could only utter those few words, "Little children, love one another, and keep yourselves from idols."

I believe your dependence has been on Christ, while I have been with you. I know that what has been done, has been done by him, and not by me; and I do not think he would have done it, had you not honoured him by dependence upon him. I cannot help hoping that I have by my teaching brought you to say within yourselves, "What is our minister but God's instrument by whom we believe? So then, neither is he that planteth anything, nor he that watereth anything, but God that giveth the increase; and we give all the glory to the Divine agent. And for the successful ministry of the younger pastor, we depend as much upon Christ for that as we have done for the older one." With such a spirit of dependence upon Christ, the divine Lord will be with you. Give to my young brother all the respect, confidence, and affection, which you have so long given to me. He is entering upon his course with talents and acquirements far superior to those with which I came here, half a century ago; but had he ten times the talents and acquirements of us both, without Christ he would be nothing. Of whatever magnitude he may be as one of the stars held in the Redeemer's hand, view him only as a satellite, shining with the splendour, and revolving in the attraction, of the Sun of Righteousness; and ever pray for him as such. Thus

looking above ministers to Christ, the good Lord will still help you. It is not probable that many more years will be allotted to me to labour among you. My sun may be touching the horizon, behind which it will be lost from mortal ken; but God will be with you, and with my young brother, and whatever bitter dregs of life, from physical causes, may remain of my cup, they will be sweetened by knowing that you are in peace and prosperity. By this thought, the pillow of death will be softened for me. And then

> "My grateful soul on Jordan's shore
> Shall raise one sacred pillar more:
> Then bear in God's bright courts above
> Inscriptions of immortal love."

THE ANTIDOTE OF DEATH.

A FUNERAL SERMON,

OCCASIONED BY THE DEATH OF MRS. REDFORD,

LATE WIFE OF THE REV. G. REDFORD, D.D., L.L.D.,

AND DELIVERED IN

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During the last twenty-five years of the Author's life Dr. Redford was, of all his ministerial friends, the one whose opinion and counsel he most valued. In every great emergency he sought the Doctor's advice, and he joined the Worcestershire Association principally to act in co-operation with him. By the following discourse he made a return for the like service, which on the death of his second wife had been rendered to him by Dr. Redford. He seldom therefore preached a funeral sermon with so much sympathy for the mourners, or under circumstances so calculated to manifest his own feelings in connection with death.

Philippians i, 21.

To die is gain.

It is unnecessary that I should inform you what event has brought me into your pulpit on the present occasion, and led to the selection of the text I have just read. The emblem of mourning which is now upon my person, the large and solemn assembly by which I am surrounded, and that bereaved family which I see before me, proclaim that the King of Terrors has invaded the sanctuary, and in his irresistible career of conquest has borne off another victim to his dark domain, and deposited another trophy in the vast storehouse of his spoils. Yes, but in this case, as well as in every other death of a true Christian, that victim, as she fell beneath his stroke, triumphantly exclaimed, "Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy, for though I fall, I shall arise," for to me "to die is gain."

This is one of the most extraordinary sentences that ever was written by the pen, or uttered by the lips of man. It is an astounding and stupendous paradox, inasmuch as it unites two things so hostile to each other, as death and gain. It seems to contradict equally the testimony of our senses, our reason, and our observation. Death is nature's supreme evil; that monster from

whose hideous form all sentient beings instinctively recoil with dread and horror; and whose icy touch withers all sublunary hopes and joys. Yet here is a man, calmly, unhesitatingly, and authoritatively asserting, as a maxim not to be denied, that death is gain: that the event which destroys us is our salvation: and that which strips us of everything is our profit. And it is true, though it seems to be uttered in mockery of all our instincts, and all the feelings of our humanity, for it is a response from the oracle of inspiration.

I. Let us inquire to whom this startling expression applies. Is it a universal proposition? In one sense it is, and in another it is not. It is universal in application to all true Christians, but not in reference to the whole human race. The latter part of the verse from which the text is taken, is limited in its application by the former. "For me," said the apostle, "to live is Christ, and to die is gain." Character and privilege, in the Word of God, are inseparably connected, and so must they be in our history. To those, and to those only, to whom Christ is life, will death be gain. What is to follow death depends upon what precedes it.

In every view we can take of the subject, Christ is the believer's life. His mediation is the meritorious cause of life. Through his death upon the cross, as an atonement for sin, we are delivered from the bitter pains of eternal death, and receive a title to eternal life. "He that believeth in him hath everlasting life." Christ's grace is the efficient cause of life. "God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son." Being brought by his Spirit through faith into vital union with him, as a branch in the true vine, we receive a spiritual vitality into our soul, previously dead in

trespasses and sins. Christ's example is the model of our life; the inward principle of life in the soul, developes itself into a likeness to him. The mind of Christ must be in us: the image of Christ must be upon us. But the specific idea the apostle had in his thoughts when he penned this passage is, that Christ was the end, the scope, the object of his whole existence. This terse and beautiful expression is a condensation of the meaning of the preceding verse, "According to my earnest expectation, and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also, Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death." As a man he acted, as a Christian he lived, as a minister he preached, for Christ. The Lord Jesus was the theme of all his teaching, was the end of all his labours, and all his sufferings, for he "determined to know nothing but Christ and him crucified." He had no moral existence apart from Christ. As his own spiritual life grew out of the life of the Saviour, so it seemed almost to grow into it again. He cared not what he did or suffered; where or with whom he was; whether he lived or died; so that his Divine Master was honoured and his cause promoted. He felt as if he would lose almost his personal identity, and be swallowed up in Christ. This was his religion, and it must in some measure be ours. We are not Christians unless Christ is our life. There was nothing in this peculiar to the apostle Paul. If we are not looking by faith to the atoning sacrifice of Christ for eternal life; if we have not the spirit of Christ in us, as the principle of a divine and heavenly vitality; if we are not making Christ, in his holy, loving, lowly conduct, the pattern of our character; and

are not setting up his honour and glory as the very end of our being; we are not those to whom death will be gain. It is said of all true believers, "None of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord, or whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore or die, we are the Lord's." The true Christian life, therefore, is not merely piety towards God, a general devoutness of feeling in reference to the Deity, but a living to God, as in Christ. It is not merely a Divine life, or a heavenly one, or a spiritual one, but emphatically a Christian one. It is a course of holy vitality fed by faith in Christ, and directed as its end to him. The Christian may be rich, but he cannot enjoy his wealth, nor does he deem himself rightly employing it, if Christ be not honoured by it. He may be poor, but if by his contentment Christ can be magnified, he can bear his privations. He may be called to suffer, but if his sufferings will, by his manner of enduring chastisement, honour Christ, he is willing to suffer. If men exalt him, he is pleased with it only as Christ is exalted in him. He would gladly set in the shadow of his Master, and be forgotten, if Jesus could be remembered.

All this, I know, describes the Christian as he should be, rather than as we often see him; the divine idea of Christianity, rather than the human exemplification of it; the beau ideal, rather than the living reality. Yet there are those, and we would hope not a few, who in some humble measure are enabled thus to act. It is their aim, their endeavour, their prayer, that men may see something of Christ in them, and acknowledge it to his honour and glory. They enjoy their own conversion and salvation, as redounding to the praise

of the Saviour. Connected with all this is an anxious desire and constant effort to do nothing that shall dishonour Christ, and cause the holy name whereby they are called to be blasphemed. It produces a thrill of anguish in their souls to think of their doing any thing whereby the glory of Christ shall be in any way compromised or eclipsed.

To all such, and only to such as are thus living to Christ, will death be gain. To all else will it be irreparable loss, entire and everlasting ruin. When the spirit leaves the clay tabernacle of the dying sinner, of the man who has lived for self instead of Christ, he becomes eternally bankrupt. He loses two worlds at once. He is stripped of everything upon earth; property, schemes, friends, prospects, and hopes; enters the invisible world in a state of absolute penury, and wanders through eternity poor and miserable and naked, without so much as a drop of water to quench his burning thirst after happiness, or to cool his tongue tormented in the flames of Divine indignation and wrath. If death be gain, we repeat, it is only to those who live to Christ. The character limits the privilege, even as the privilege invariably follows the character. It is, therefore, of infinite consequence that you inquire most diligently and anxiously whether you are thus living to Christ. You may have what you call religion, but does it answer to this description. Is this its definition? Living to Christ. If so, then may you appropriate to yourself the glorious privilege which we are now about to set forth.

II. We will now investigate the meaning and prove the truth of this expression: To die is gain. There are few words that have had a more powerful influence over

human affairs than gain. The love of gain is one of the earliest and strongest instincts of our nature. The whole current of earthly pursuits is kept in motion by it. It is the foundation of trade and commerce. Civilization is promoted by it; yea, the very fabric of social life seems in some measure to rest upon it. Our general conduct is regulated by it. When anything is proposed to us, we instinctively, and, provided we do not sink into a sordid selfishness and a low utilitarianism, we very properly, ask, "What shall we gain by it?" Our Lord appealed to this principle of action when he said, "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" Gain cannot, therefore, be a matter of indifference; and it is the folly and sin of men that they do not carry this principle far enough, but confine it to pecuniary transactions, and do not extend the application of it to moral subjects, as our Lord did in the passage just quoted. Blessed, inexpressibly blessed, is the man, who in reckoning up his gains can enter death as one of the items. This the apostle did, where he says in another place, "death is yours," and also in the text before us. But how wonderful does this appear when we consider what death is. Death is the most fearful word and the most fearful thing in the universe next to hell and sin. It terminates our earthly existence; puts an end to all our schemes; frustrates our hopes; realises our fears; dispossesses us of our property; separates us from our friends; dissolves the union of soul and body; turns the warm sentient frame into a lump of cold and lifeless clay; sends the once living man into the prison of the tomb; finishes our probation for eternity, and stops all the means of grace: such is death, terrible

in its antecedents, still more terrible in its circumstances, and most terrible of all, in its consequences. Yet death, to the believer, notwithstanding all this, is gain. True he loses much by dying. He loses this beautiful world, the glorious sun, the bright moon, and the host of stars. He loses all share and interest in the affairs of his country and other nations. He loses the arts, the sciences, and all human learning. He loses his friends, and the sweet ties and charities of social and domestic life. Coming to spiritual things, he loses his Bible, his minister, and all the means of grace and ordinances of religion. In short, he loses all that is dear and precious to him in life and upon earth. What an apparent wreck and ruin! What a catastrophe! And yet, in sight of all this, we still say, for the apostle who "spake as he was moved by the Holy Ghost," affirmed it, "To die is gain," to him to whom to live was Christ. All he loses upon earth, compared with what he gains in heaven, is as the surrender of a little homestead and a contracted farm to gain a kingdom and a crown; or as giving up a momentary gratification of the palate to secure the happiness of a whole life; or parting with a single farthing for the acquisition of a princely revenue. Ere we come to the detail of fact and proof, we may argue, that if this be the loss which we sustain by death, what must heaven be to more than compensate for this? But how shall the gain of a redeemed soul by death be estimated by the comparatively contracted powers of man, and especially when we consider that he knows so little of what is beyond the grave? He can by arithmetic and mathematics measure the distances and ascertain the gravity of the planets. He can almost

appraise the wealth of the globe; but how can he strike the balance between what the believer loses and gains by death? For this, he requires not only the capacity of the spirits made perfect, but the infinite mind of Deity itself. We can, however, under the guidance of revelation, say something upon it, though it is but little, and what we have to say may be summed up under two heads.

1. Death is gain by delivering the Christian from all evils.

How much of evil of various kinds is to be found on earth. It is a region of evils. They are without us and within us; in our body and in our soul; around us and before us. No wonder our Lord has put into our lips that petition, "Deliver us from evil;" or that he himself should in prayer for us say, "Keep them from the evil." Those prayers will be fully answered, when the stroke of death, which dissolves the union between soul and body, shall dissolve the union also between the believer and evil, and place him at an infinite distance from the reach of it in every form and every degree. Whatever of evil there now is, in soul or body, in his circumstances or connections, shall for ever depart from him, and he from it. Evil, that word, so significant, so comprehensive, so emphatic of all that is to be deprecated or detested, shall have no reference to him. Labour and weariness; sickness and weakness; pain and distress; hunger and thirst; sleeplessness and restlessness; cruelty and oppression; slander and defamation; care and fear; danger and disappointment, shall all be lost for ever.

> "Sin, our worst enemy before,
> Shall vex our eyes and ears no more."

There will be no mortification of sin there, for there will be no sin to mortify. The agonies of the crucifixion of the flesh shall be endured no more, for the flesh itself will no longer exist. No ignorance will becloud the judgment, no rebellion enslave the will, no depravity taint the heart, no disorder misguide the passions to a wrong object, or enervate them towards good ones. Suspense will be over. Gloomy doubts will no longer cover the soul with their deep, dark shadows. Not a passing cloud will ever eclipse or intercept the rays of the Sun of Righteousness; nor a drop of the divine anger, real or imagined, ever embitter the cup of salvation. The horrid suggestions of Satan will never again be shot like fiery darts into the soul, nor his temptations allure us from the path of rectitude. The world, with its snares and fascinations, its corrupt maxims and seductive examples, will have no place there.

And as there will be no evil in ourselves, so there will be none in our companions. Every one around us will be as free from evil as we shall be. As there will be nothing wrong in our own nature to remove, so there will be none in others to condemn. The delicate and difficult duties of confessing our own faults, and of reproving those of our companions, will be required no more. There will be no envies or jealousies; nor will any, even the least, strife, disturb by a single ripple the surface of that boundless and fathomless ocean of heavenly love, harmony, and peace. If by death we enter into such a world as this, is it not, must it not be gain?

2. Death will be gain because it brings us to the possession and enjoyment of all desirable, great, and glorious things.

Dwell upon the meaning and mark the comprehension of this sentence. Every word is advisedly chosen, and is pregnant with important meaning. In heaven there will be all things really desirable. In this world our possessions are strangely incommensurate with our desires, and much of our uneasiness arises from unaccomplished and unsatisfied cravings. Many of these are unreasonable and others unattainable, and if attained, would be injurious rather than beneficial. But in heaven no such unhappiness as either the indulgence of an improper desire, or the disappointment of a proper one, will ever be experienced. We shall wish only for what is right for us to possess, and shall possess all we desire. No irrational or unmeet wish will ever be indulged, and all that can gratify the longings of a perfectly holy and wise mind will be granted. The objects of choice will stand all before us, and the soul, without restless craving or painful urgency, will quietly repose in the enjoyment of them. But all things that are desirable are not great; there is often a sad disproportion between the objects we covet, and the intensity of our longings after them. By turns, we soar by ambition above the level of our condition, and by grovelling meanness sink beneath it. The little things that please and satisfy us here, are often a reflection upon our wisdom; but in heaven there is nothing either objectively or subjectively little. Everything is great, noble, and sublime there. Infinity and eternity are the only conditions in Paradise. We ourselves shall have outgrown all the littleness of our earthly condition, and arrived at the full stature of a glorified immortal; and all around us will be proportioned to a spirit made perfect. We shall have put away all childish things, and be conversant

with nothing but what a soul in its full and undecaying perfection might consistently be familiar with, as its habitual and chosen sources of delight. All things that are desirable and great, are not in the fullest sense glorious; but by death we gain whatever deserves to be characterised by this expressive term. There are two words employed by the sacred writers in describing the heavenly state, each of which conveys to my mind, vague and general as they are, a more impressive idea of future bliss, than the most lengthened and elaborate description of it. The first of these is life. What is so valuable to man as life? "Skin for skin, all that a man hath, will he give for his life." To preserve his life, the peer will surrender his coronet, the rich man his fortune, and the monarch his crown. And this, notwithstanding the uncertainty of their possessing it for an hour, and the absolute assurance that it must in its best condition contain, as long as it lasts, an admixture of evil with every good. Heaven is life, eternal life. On earth we shall never fully know the meaning and emphasis of that expressive word. We now but imperfectly understand what it is really to live. Our present existence is a mixture of life and death; it is a living death, or a dying life. The flower of life is only half blown; and the leaf but half unfolded. But by death we come to the full possession of life, and then first know what it is to live. We emerge from the chrysalis state of our existence, and on the wings of our resuscitated powers fly abroad amidst the fruits and flowers of the celestial Paradise. Our intellectual, spiritual, and social being will there be in full and everlasting development. There are moments on earth, (but O, how rare!) when as men and as Christians, we seem so unusually full of vitality,

that we are ready to exclaim, "This is life; and I do now seem to know what it is to live." Seasons there are when the wintry chill and icy coldness of spiritual declension seem to give way to a spring-time of the soul, and the drooping plants of grace revive and flourish, and appear instinct with new energy and clothed with new beauty. Alas, how brief and rare on earth, and with us, are such gushes of vitality. But by death we gain this holy, heavenly life in full and undying perfection.

The other general term by which our future state of bliss is set forth is glory. What a charm and power are there in that term: and if it do not very clearly inform the judgment, how it irradiates and kindles the imagination! What a stir has it made in human affairs! What ambition it has awakened; what enthusiasm it has excited; what labours and sacrifices it has prompted! See the warrior seeking it in fields of blood, amidst slaughter and destruction; what perils will he not brave for military glory! See the poet and the painter wearing out life, to gain the palm of glory by artistic renown. When we want a more than ordinarily expressive term of admiration, we call a thing glorious. Now this is the most common designation of the celestial state. It is "glory," "glory to be revealed," "a crown of glory," "the excellent glory," "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory," and to bring all to a climax, it is "the glory of God." Heaven only is really and substantially glorious, and all the most splendid and illustrious things on earth are but dim shadows of its bright effulgence; mere ignes fatui, as compared with the noontide radiance of the sun. Death alone is the road to real glory.

In heaven we shall not merely behold these infinite and at present unknown glories, but we shall say, "All these are mine. I am a proprietor, and not merely a spectator and an admirer." How many things on earth there are which we admire, but cannot hope to possess, and in reference to which we are ready to say, "How happy must he be, who can call these things his own." When the Queen of Sheba beheld the glory of Solomon her spirit almost fainted amidst the splendour, and she burst forth in a rapturous strain of congratulation on all who were privileged to behold it; but especially on the royal proprietor himself. It was Solomon's felicity to call it all his own. What blessedness will it be for us to be in heaven, and when surveying its glories, to be able exultingly to exclaim, "This exceeding great and eternal weight of glory is all mine, and mine for ever." But possession and enjoyment do not always go together, for sometimes the latter is in the inverse ratio of the former. There are persons who are miserable in the midst of abundance. They possess all things, yet enjoy nothing. Through disease of body or mind they have a vitiated state of soul, which tastes a bitter in everything. Their possessions afford but spectres of misery, shapes of sorrow, instead of visions of bliss. They are mocked and tantalised by their honours and their wealth, and look with envy on those who have nothing. But in the heavenly state, possession and enjoyment will be united. The objective source of happiness and the subjective condition of the soul will be in harmony. There will be nothing in its physical or spiritual state to interrupt the enjoyment of what God has prepared for it. In robust mental and moral health it will fully partake of the fulness of joy which

is in God's presence, and the pleasures which are at his right hand for evermore. Infinite sources of happiness will open and send forth the streams of perfect bliss, and the glorified spirit shall, without hindrance or stint, drink its fill of the pure water of life.

Leaving now these general remarks, we may notice in speaking of the blessedness of the righteous, to which they are introduced by death, their residence. It is their father's house in that city spoken of in the Apocalypse, which has foundations of precious stones, whose gates are pearl, and its streets gold; which needs not the light of the sun, for the Lord God is the light thereof; the palace of the great King, the dwelling-place of God, which he has fitted up for himself and his redeemed family. No matter where is its locality; no matter a thousand other things connected with its circumstances; it is enough to know that it is the high and lofty place of Him who inhabiteth eternity.

Consider the agreeable and happy associates of all who reach that happy world. The innumerable company of angels; the spirits of just men made perfect; cherubim and seraphim; thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers; the goodly fellowship of the prophets, the glorious company of apostles, the noble army of martyrs; with all pious kings, ministers, missionaries, and others, that compose the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are written in heaven.

Consider their employment. It doth not yet appear what we shall be, nor what we shall do. Heaven will be no place for idleness. True, we shall rest from our labours; but activity in glory will not be labour. It will unite the quietude and ease of repose with the pleasure of occupation. In what variety of ways this

occupation shall be carried on, we cannot say or even conjecture; but one thing is mentioned as comprehending everything, there "His servants shall serve him." A form of expression which would seem to imply, that compared with what they shall do for him there, all they had done on earth scarcely deserved the name of service, and that their whole eternal existence would be one uninterrupted act of entire obedience to him.

Consider their condition. They shall have the light of perfect knowledge irradiating their understanding, the glow of perfect love warming their hearts, and the purity of perfect holiness diffused through their character. In addition to this representation must be mentioned the resurrection of the body at the last day, incorruptible, immortal, glorious, and spiritual. But the crowning excellence of this state will be that they shall be with Christ where he is, behold his glory, see him as he is, and be like him. And all this not for a limited period, but for ever and ever.

If all this will be obtained by death, and cannot be obtained without dying, then how plain is it that death is gain! And be it recollected, this gain accrues to all who live to Christ. Not only to that isolated and friendless man, who in this world has none to smile upon him, and to whom is never addressed the sweet music of friendly speech; but to him also who goes away from the loveliest circle ever collected around a family hearth. Not only to him whose whole life has been one continual series of the ills of poverty, who has dwelt in a hovel or a workhouse; but to him also who leaves a superb mansion, and abounding wealth, luxury, and honour. Not only to him who has groaned away life in pain and loathsome disease;

but to him also who is cut down in the bloom of health, and is hurried away from long years of earthly pleasure yet unspent. In short, if we have lived for Christ, we lose nothing by death, for which an infinite compensation is not made, in that blessed world to which the last enemy sends us. Nor does it matter by what death we die, whether by the gentlest natural decay and dissolution, or by the violence of martyrdom. The agonies of the stake, of the amphitheatre, or even of crucifixion, may be added to all that has been considered as lost by the stroke of mortality; still it is true that by death we are infinite gainers. Heaven will infinitely more than make amends for all. We shall there enter into the joy of our Lord: a joy so vast that it can scarcely be said that it enters into us, but that we enter into it; so that as death is swallowed up in victory, and mortality is swallowed up of life, we ourselves, with all our sorrows, are swallowed up of joy. Must not death then, I again ask, be gain, when it is thus an exchange of probation for acceptance; of sowing for reaping; of conflict for victory; of labour for rest; of hope for fruition; of faith for sight; of prayer for praise; of weeping for rejoicing; of the society of men for the companionship of angels; of imperfection for perfection; in short, of grace for glory, earth for heaven, and time for eternity. How true then are the words of the poet:

"Death is the crown of life.
Were death denied, poor man would live in vain;
Were death denied, to live would not be life;
Were death denied, ev'n fools would wish to die.
Death wounds to cure: we fall, we rise, we reign,
Spring from our fetters, hasten to the skies,
Where blooming Eden withers in our sight.
Death gives us more than was in Eden lost,
The King of Terrors is the Prince of Peace."

Nor is the gain of a believer's death confined to himself; it is shared with him by that blessed assembly into which it introduces him. Every addition to their number is a fresh accession to their bliss. Is it conceivable that the angels can witness with indifference the entrance of a human spirit into the world of glory? Did they sing the natal anthem of his spiritual birth? Did they minister to his salvation through the period of his moral childhood on earth? And shall they feel none of the exultation, and partake of none of the joy, indulged at the celebration of his maturity in heaven? And as to the spirits of just men made perfect, how cordially must their benevolence make them hail and welcome the arrival of another of their brothers or sisters at their Father's house above! To them, the arrival of each glorified soul must be like the scenes of a shipwreck, when branch after branch of a family that was on board the lost vessel, reaches in safety the shore, and is welcomed by those who had previously escaped. And, O, what will be the felicity of those of our own friends, who have reached the happy land before us, when they receive us to their society! How will they rejoice over us! How beautifully does Toplady refer to this.

"Saints in glory perfect made,
Wait our passage through the shade,
Ardent for our coming o'er;
See, they throng the blissful shore!

Mount their transports to improve,
Join the longing choir above,
Swiftly to their wish be given,
Kindle higher joy in heaven."

We may advance even a step further, and say, that the death of a believer is, in some sense, gain to Christ.

Not indeed to his essential glory, for nothing can add to this. But is he not magnified by the death of his saints, in the support which he administers, the consolation he imparts, and the triumphant joys which he inspires? How glorious does he appear in the martyr's sacred heroism. To see delicate women and timid men braving the terrors of the axe, the gibbet, and the stake, and also for the love they bear to him giving themselves up to be torn in pieces by wild beasts in the amphitheatre: is not this for Christ to gain much glory to his name? And if not so illustrious a triumph is won by him on the death bed of his people, yet even there his name is magnified by the testimony they bear to his wisdom, power, and faithful love. Their holy confidence, their peaceful minds, their joyful anticipations, their pious resignation on parting from their dearest friends, and the holy fortitude with which they plunge into the dark waters of death, secure of rising on the opposite shore in glory, honour, and immortality, redound to his praise. As their spirits enter the regions of bliss, what shouts of praise ascend to Him who has redeemed them by his blood, and kept them through faith unto salvation. In their safe arrival he sees the travail of his soul, and is satisfied. His glorified humanity gains an accession to his felicity in every soul that comes to be a new jewel in his mediatorial crown; he looks on these objects of his love, and rejoices over them.

In every view, therefore, we can take of the subject, the death of the Christian is immense eternal gain, and that which seemed likely as the consequence of sin to be man's destruction, issues in his salvation, and the manifestation of God's infinite glory. It is not wonderful, therefore, that in falling beneath the stroke of

mortality, the dying believer should utter a shout of triumph, and exclaim, "O death! where is thy sting? O grave! where is thy victory?"

I shall now advert to that excellent woman, whom you so lately had in your midst, but whom God has removed to his heavenly kingdom, and whose lamented decease has given occasion to this discourse. Having yourselves known her so intimately for nearly thirty years, as your pastor's wife, you do not need from me any delineation of her character, or any minute detail of her excellencies. It was her inestimable privilege to be the child of religious parents, and especially of a mother of no ordinary piety, under whose instruction, and in answer to whose prayers, she early became the subject of Divine grace. What she was as a Christian, a mother, and a minister's wife, you fully know; and to your recollection of her in all these relations and aspects of her character, I may most confidently and advantageously refer you, assured that such reminiscences will be as honourable to her as they will be profitable to yourselves.

In her general character there were the cultivation and practice of Christian and feminine excellence, but no ostentatious display of them. The scenes in which she was formed by nature and by grace to shine, were those in which every woman should be most ambitious to excel, I mean the domestic circle. Of a gentle and retiring disposition, almost to timidity, she neither coveted nor sought distinction in the social party. She had no ambition to dazzle there, or to excite admiration by display. To live near to God in the closet of personal devotion, and to perform religiously the duties of

her conjugal and maternal relations, was the object of her solicitude and her prayers; and as a natural consequence, it might be truly said of her, "The heart of her husband did safely trust her. She did him good and not evil all the days of her life. She looked well to the ways of her household. Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her."

It is not every minister whose wife is a helpmeet for him, by being not only the comfort of his home, but also an assistant to him in the arduous duties of his office, by calming his spirit when perturbed, softening his anxieties when worn with care, cheering him when discouraged, and counselling him in difficulty. Some women who are brought into this situation are irritable and prone to take offence, and by their broils draw their husbands into collision with influential members of his flock. Others are proud and imperious, and offend by the haughtiness of their deportment. They will touch nothing that is going on in works of zeal, unless they can control every thing. Some do mischief by officious meddling in the private affairs of families; while others, by incautious speech, kindle strifes and cause contentions. None of these things could be said of our departed friend. The comfort of your families was never disturbed by her imprudence, nor the usefulness and influence of her husband impaired by her injudicious words or actions. Meekly and gently she moved about among you, promoting and helping your activity in works of benevolence and zeal, without seeking or wishing to be a dictatress. If you were in affliction, did you not find in her a sympathising friend? And as far as her counsel was sought, was

she not ever ready without obtrusion to afford it? And yet having a household of her own to superintend and to regulate, a husband's comfort and the well-being of by no means a small family to promote, she did not allow herself, under the plea of helping him, as a minister of Christ and the pastor of a church, to neglect the more retired and incumbent duties of her home. If too little is done by some ministers' wives to promote the welfare of their husbands' flock, too much is attempted by, and expected from, others. A minister's household government should be to the flock a pattern for order, subordination, and regularity; and this cannot be, if the female head of the establishment be not in her place.

Our dear departed friend did not pass through life without trials. Who does? A larger share, however, falls to the lot of some than to others; and her afflictions were neither few nor light. As a wife, she had at one time to tremble for that precious life which she had received in trust from God, to watch and care for. As a mother, she had to weep with her husband over the remains of a lovely son, who was snatched in a moment from their embrace by an untimely death, and passed from a watery grave to a mansion in the skies: and at another time, they had to hasten to the death bed of a blooming daughter, cut down like a spring flower, in the city of Edinburgh. And these were not all her trials, yet how submissively did she bow to the will of her heavenly Father, and glorify God in the fires. She wept, and even groaned in spirit; but though she mourned, she did not murmur.

There was, of course, no great variety of incident in her history, to become the subject of picturesque

narrative, and to be brought with interest, or held up for admiration or astonishment, in a funeral discourse. Her course through life was not that of a rapid and roaring torrent, but of a gentle, noiseless stream, attracting little notice, yet scattering benefits as it flowed onward. If she was not often found in the circles of the gay, the great, and the rich, the poor knew her in their humble dwellings as their benefactress and their friend, and will miss her visits of mercy and her acts of beneficence. And what right-hearted person does not covet more to wipe away the tears of the sons and daughters of suffering poverty, than to enjoy the caresses of the affluent and the fashionable?

I now pass from her living activities to her dying scenes. Perhaps the commencement, or at any rate the introduction, if not the cause of them, may be dated so far back as last August, when amidst the beautiful and sublime scenery of Wales, in the enjoyment of innocent recreation with her husband and daughter, and in the pursuit of renovated energies for him, the accident occurred, which might have caused his death, as it did cause the fracture of a limb. That event, it is every way probable, gave a shock to an already somewhat enfeebled constitution, and prepared it for the attack, and, ultimately, the death that followed. Let us, while bowing with submission to the event of her decease, rejoice and give thanks that the still more important life of the two has been spared to us. Even that life has of late occasioned solicitude. It is affecting to see the ties of tender sympathy between husband and wife thus become the channels of suffering and disease to each other. The wife was first brought into

a shattered state of health by the accident of her husband, and he then, by watching, waking, and ministering to her, was reduced to a state of great infirmity, till at one time it seemed uncertain whether he might not have had his existence imperilled. Ah, it is thus that in our present imperfect state, our closest ties, and best and purest earthly affections, may become the avenues of disease and death.

I have been permitted to read some memoranda of her last illness, preserved by her daughters, who scarcely ever left her room, and who for their own comfort and edification have gathered up the sayings which dropped from her lips, and described the manner in which she met the last enemy and triumphed over the love of life and fear of death. Her sufferings were protracted and severe. For three long weary months she was confined to her chamber, during a great part of which time she was unable to lie down in bed, and was called to the endurance of severe pain. Think what that suffering must have been which compelled her to say, "Could I have but five minutes' cessation of pain, I should account it a great mercy." But that mercy was rarely granted to her. Such severity and length of suffering were, of course, a test of faith and patience; but hers stood beautifully the test. No murmuring word ever escaped her lips. Sometimes when nature compelled a visible or audible manifestation of the fiery trial she was passing through, she would say, "I fear I am impatient;" when those around were admiring her meek endurance and her uncomplaining submission. Neither length nor severity of suffering induced, as it sometimes does, peevishness towards those around, or an engrossing selfishness, which made her indifferent to the comfort

of those who ministered to her. It was inexpressibly touching to listen to her tender regrets for the trouble she gave them, and her expressions of gratitude for those attentions, which, while they comforted her, brought their own reward to those that paid them. Her allusions to her husband and her children, in prospect of dissolution, often melted them to tears, and sometimes herself by the tenderness and solemnity with which they were uttered. Her approaching decease was not unfrequently the subject of affecting discourse. There was no need of reserve even on this awful topic. She had the sentence of death in herself, and she read it, not only without alarm, but with the calmness of philosophy rising into the loftier exercises of christian hope. She "knew in whom she believed, and was persuaded he was able to keep that which she had committed to him until that day." She anticipated that death would be gain to her, and why should she fear? She felt the pang of separation from her husband and children, and was not so weary of life that she had no desire, had it been the will of God, to remain longer with them; but she was at the same time willing to depart and be with Christ. And on one occasion said, in reference to heaven, "There my best friends and kindred dwell."

But perhaps you will form a more correct opinion of the state of her mind, and of her deep humility, if I read an extract from the memoranda to which I have alluded, and which has been furnished me by the family:

Lord's-day, the 18th of November, she went to chapel for the last time, labouring under great bodily weakness. She became conscious on that day that her worst symptoms were increasing. When this

was noticed by one of her daughters, she said, "I cannot help feeling low when I think of what I may have to go through." But notwithstanding this dread of future pain she continued perfectly calm and self-possessed. In the evening of the same Sabbath-day, she observed, "I was just praying for Robert." Her daughter said, "And what did you ask for him?" She replied, "That his sermon to-night might be blessed to some more young people."

On observing to her, "What a comfort it is that we are not confined to one mode of prayer, but are sure that God hears us when we pray in any attitude and in any place," she said, "I cannot always pray kneeling down; my prayers are principally ejaculatory."

At another time she said, "I am not a great thinker; but I feel a great deal, and in the night I was praying much that the Lord would appear for me, for it is hard work!" When asked if she was quite happy, she said, "Not quite so!" and when asked again "Why?" she said, "I have not the composure I wish for." It was added, "You have nothing to fear, and are resting on the Rock of Ages, and Jesus has done all for you:" she replied, "But I feel that I have not come up to his requirements."

Shortly after she said, "I have suffered dreadful pain through this day, but I have been supported." At another time she was asked, "What do you think of your own case?" She replied, "I think it is a difficult case to manage, at least it seems so; but I know how good God has been to me, and if He has anything more for me to do, He will spare me a little longer."

The day following she said, "The Lord is very merciful, and I have found Him faithful. He is always doing me good. Blessed be His holy name." When in great suffering, it was observed to her, "How soon God can afflict us. We are His and not our own." She replied, "Yes; bought with a price." It was said, "Christ's sheep shall never perish;" and she replied in a moment, "I am not afraid of that: I am not afraid of perishing." When wonder was expressed that she could bear her great sufferings so patiently, she said, "The Lord helps me, hold Thou me up, He holds me by my right hand, and lays His arm underneath me."

After an interval of comparative freedom from pain, she said, "I am very thankful for it; that is the first feeling that rises in my heart when I have any ease, thankfulness." At the same time, speaking of the prayer, "Hold Thou me up and I shall be safe," she said, "That is a favourite text of mine. It's a great thing to believe that always, and to feel it."

When reminded of God's goodness in affording her the gratification of seeing and conversing with so many of her friends, she was much affected and said, "He is indeed good, and yet I am so ungrateful." After a severe fit of coughing by which she was greatly exhausted, it was observed to her, "You must not fear that God will leave you." She said, "I trust He will not;" and added, "Trust in Him at all times. His praise shall continually be in my mouth. His mercy endureth for ever," repeating the last words, "for ever!" After a day of great suffering, it was said to her, "You have seemed low to-day and not able to think." She replied, "I have been low to-day, and not able to raise a thought half-way to God; but He has been with me notwithstanding, and helped me." This was said with strong emphasis.

Referring to her children, she said, "You will all feel your mother's death." One of her daughters said, "You are not afraid?" She most emphatically replied, "No; I am not afraid." When seized with a severe fit of coughing, which had well-nigh choked her, after it had subsided a little, she seemed in prayer, and looking up, said, "Keep me; oh, keep me." Her daughter replied, "God will keep you from sinking in the deep waters." She promptly and sweetly replied, "How can I sink with such a prop as my eternal God!"

As her sufferings increased, one of her daughters said to her, "Would you not like to be with Jesus?" She replied earnestly, "I should be thankful." Shortly after she was asked again, "You are not afraid, are you?" She replied with warmth, "Afraid of what?" It was said, "Of dying." She replied very calmly, "Why should I be afraid? Not at all, not at all."

Shortly after these expressions, the sufferings of the poor body were ended, and her happy spirit entered into the joy of the Lord.

And now, my dear friend and brother, in reciprocating by this discourse a similar service you performed for me fifteen years ago, will you allow me thus publicly to express to you the tender sympathy I feel for you under your bereavement, aggravated as this trial has been by your own personal affliction; an affliction, as I have said, brought on in great part by those assiduous attentions, by day and night, which you paid to the object of your tenderest affection. I need not tell you how much solicitude we felt on your account: a soli-

citude which has drawn forth not only the sympathies but the prayers of your flock. Thank God these prayers have, to a considerable extent, been answered in your gradually returning health. You need no proofs of the esteem in which you are held by your friends, elsewhere as well as here, and it is almost unnecessary for me to say how many thanksgivings were rendered to God for the preservation of your life, when it was in some measure in peril, and which will be renewed for your return to health and labour. In mercies lost you will not forget those that are left: and among them stands prominent the honour and happiness conferred upon you in having a son preaching that gospel, which for nearly half-a-century has been the theme of your ministry: whose occasional ministrations in his father's pulpit were heard with such chastened pride (shall I say?) and devout thankfulness by his mother, ere she was removed to her eternal rest. Long may it be granted to him to publish the glad tidings of salvation after your lips and mine are closed in the silence of the grave.* And as regards your own continuance upon earth, may many years be yet allotted to you, to edify your own church, and others too, by your faithful preaching, and to benefit the Christian community at large by the labours of your pen: and in this heavy trial which has come upon you, may you be able to say with the apostle, "Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, with the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our

* The Rev. Robert Redford, M.A., Hull.

consolation also aboundeth by Christ. And whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation; or whether we be comforted, it is also still for your consolation and salvation."

1. What a proof and manifestation have we in this subject, and in this short memorial of our departed friend, of the truth, the excellence, and the sustaining power of Christianity. What else ever did, or ever could, say, "To die is gain?" What else could enable us when we plant our foot in Golgotha, and see ourselves surrounded with the triumphs and trophies of the King of Terrors, "skulls and coffins, epitaphs and worms," and mourners weeping bitter tears, to say, "I gain by coming here?" What can infidelity do in such a scene as this? What has the unbeliever to comfort him in the approach of death? To his exploring, anxious eye, nothing appears but the black and frowning rocks of annihilation, on which he is driven before a power he cannot resist, and on which he expects every moment to strike. Miserable man! How loud the winds howl! How fiercely the billows roll! How dark is the night! No lighthouse throws out its friendly beam for him. No haven opens its friendly bosom to receive him to a refuge. No pilot is on board to guide his tempest-tossed bark to safe anchorage in quiet waters. Death to him is a fatal shipwreck, in which he loses all, and perishes himself. And this loss and destruction is all that he has to offer me in exchange for that precious volume which brings life and incorruption to light. How can I help saying to him, "Curse not me with your boasted discoveries that revelation is an imposture, and religion a delusion. Keep your dark lantern to yourself, and leave me in possession of that heaven-kindled torch

which lights me through the darkness of death and the night of the tomb, into the region of eternal and unclouded day." If at one time than another Christianity appears to greater advantage, it is when she is seen invading the territory of the monarch of the grave, doing battle with him in his own domain, and erecting her trophies in the dark valley of the shadow of death.

2. What a powerful means have we in this subject to aid us in our endeavour to overcome the undue love of life and fear of death.

It is a solemn and a startling truth, "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him:" for if any man love not God, he is none of his, and cannot go to heaven. Men may as certainly, though not as disgracefully, go down to the pit, through the love of the world, as through the love of sin. Yea, for multitudes it is the broadest, smoothest, and most respectable road to perdition. They are gaining, not indeed the whole world, but as much of it as they can, and all the while losing their own souls. To obtain wealth and what it purchases is their sole ambition, and yet at some time they must, and at any time they may, be called to surrender all their gains, and stripped of all, to go down to the grave. It is recorded of Saladin, so distinguished in the wars of the Crusades, that after he had subdued Egypt, passed the Euphrates, conquered cities without number, and retaken Jerusalem, he finished his life by an action that ought to be transmitted to the latest posterity. A moment before he uttered his last sigh, he called the herald who had carried his banner before him in all his battles, and commanded him to fasten to the top of a lance, the shroud in which the dying prince was about to be

buried. "Go," said he, "carry this lance, unfurl this banner, and while you lift up this standard, proclaim: This, this, is all that remains to Saladin the Great, the conqueror and the emperor of the East, of all his glory." "Christians!" said a French preacher, "I perform to-day the office of this herald. I fasten to the top of a spear sensual and intellectual pleasures, worldly riches, and human honours. All these I reduce to the piece of crape in which you will shortly be buried. This standard of death I lift up in your sight, and cry, 'This, this, is all that will remain to you of the possessions for which you have exchanged your souls.' Are such possessions too great to be given in exchange for a soul? Can the idea of their perishing nature prevail over the idea of the immortality of the soul? And do you not feel the truth of the text, 'What shall a man,' a rational man, who is capable of comparing eternity with time; what shall such a man,' give in exchange for his soul?" Oh, it is horribly, inexpressibly, affecting to see such multitudes bartering away their souls, for gains, which, if they could be counted by millions, would, when weighed against their eternal interests, be less than the small dust of the balance; yea, less than absolute nothing and vanity.

Consider the parable of the rich man in the gospel, who while surveying with exulting heart his accumulating stores, congratulating himself on his gains, and anticipating future enjoyment, was disturbed by that awful voice, "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee; then whose shall those things be which thou hast acquired?"

And are not believers too much engaged, allured, enamoured, and ensnared by the gains of this world?

Would it not seem as if these, even to them were, if not their all, at any rate their best? Are not they too much set on getting wealth, as if it were their chief good? Do they not look and act as if they thought they should be beggared and deprived of their portion, if they lost their wealth, or as if they should be miserable if they could not gain much of this world's goods? Is not worldliness the sin of the Church?

How shall this inordinate affection for earthly things be cured? How shall the victory over the world be obtained? How? Not by trouble; not by bodily austerities; not by self abnegation. No; but by faith: by faith in Christ, in heaven, in eternity. By looking at things unseen and eternal. By bringing in upon the glory of this world the brightness of a glory that excelleth, and by which the light of the former shall be extinguished; just as the flames expire in the bright beams of the sun. Let us think more not of death merely, for as long as we think only of that, we shall cling closer to earth. It is not the grave that is the instrument of weaning us from things seen and temporal, but heaven. Let us get the image of heavenly glory more deeply imprinted on our minds and made more familiar with our thoughts. We should often place ourselves before the fifteenth chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians, and the three last chapters of the book of the Apocalypse, where the Divine Spirit has, so to speak, exhausted the force and splendour of inspiration, to make, as far as possible, the sights of heaven visible and its sounds audible. It is thus we shall be weaned from earth, and be made willing to go away; not driven out, but drawn and allured. We shall then go as the redeemed of the Lord, with everlasting

joy upon our heads, as those that know whither they go, even to a state infinitely worthy of our desires and choice, and where it is best for us to be. "We shall then part from our souls, not by a forcible separation, but by a joyful surrender and resignation. We shall dislodge from this earthly tabernacle, rather as putting it off than having it rent and torn away. Let us loosen ourselves from this body by degrees, and gather up our spirits into ourselves." Let us, I repeat, thus look more at things unseen and eternal; and inure ourselves to the thoughts of dissolution, when we shall depart to be with Christ. Instead of being always endeavouring to make earth more and more attractive, and rooting our affections in it, let us be always taking leave. "Let us cross," as Howe says, "and disprove the common maxim, and let our hearts, which they are wont to say die last, die first. Anticipate death," says he, "and be mortified towards every earthly thing beforehand, that death may have nothing to do but to kill your body; and that you may not see a double death in one hour, and suffer the death of your body and your love to it both at once. Let it be your continual song and the matter of your daily praise that the time of your happy deliverance is at hand; that ere long you shall be absent from the body and present with the Lord; that he has not doomed you to an everlasting imprisonment within those close and clayey walls wherein you have been so long shut up from the beholding of his light and glory." Instead of being always and chiefly concerned to render your abode as comfortable as you can within the precincts of this prison, and clinging to it with tenacious hold, act like the prisoner who, through the gratings of his cell, is

ever and anon looking out upon the green fields and stately mansion, for which he is shortly to exchange his confinement, and to enjoy the sweets of liberty, the pleasures of home, and the society of his friends.

It is, I know, natural to man to fear death, and it is only when, by the influence of a stoical philosophy he becomes hardened into a kind of mental petrifaction; or when, by the aid of divine grace, he rises above the feelings of nature into the triumphs of faith; that he can surmount this dread of the grave. The best, therefore, and indeed the only way, to conquer this revulsion, is to dwell, with clear intelligence, strong faith, and frequent meditation, upon the gain that will accrue to us after the stroke of mortality. He who has a dangerous voyage in prospect, at which he trembles, tries to conquer his fear by dwelling on the felicities of home to which the sea conducts him. He who has a painful surgical operation to endure, cheers himself onward to the knife, and braces up his courage for the suffering, by thinking of the pleasures of ease and health which he shall afterwards enjoy. So also the best way to subdue the fear of death and escape the bondage which it imposes, is to contemplate often and delightfully, the eternal gain to which it leads us. Death makes cowards of us all at times; but faith in the glory to be revealed, would transform us into heroes. It is this which has smiled at the scaffold, and the stake, and raised up the noble army of martyrs.

3. How this subject should reconcile us to the death of our pious friends.

Our temporary loss is their eternal gain. True it is, they loved us as we loved them, when they were on earth, and they have been deprived of our society, as we have

of theirs. But what an exchange have they made of their friends in this lower world, for those of the heavenly state! They have died, and will die, and fear to die, no more. We are looking forward to the gloomy pass, the dark valley, and are sometimes in dread of the transition. They have got safely and happily through; and are looking back upon it as an evil never to be encountered again. They have lost all their fears; have wept their last tear, and heaved their last sigh. They have reached the peaceful shore of blest eternity. Let us check our grief for their decease. We sorrow not as those who have no hope. They are gone to their Father's home, who has welcomed them to his presence, and wiped away their tears. They are for ever with the Lord. If they think of us at all, as they doubtless do, it is with pity that we are not where, and as, they are. Let us dwell upon them, not so much as dead, but as living: not as in the grave, but in glory.

Mourners in Zion, be therefore submissive. You have lost your friends, but heaven, that is attracting to itself all that is holy in this world, has gained them. Would you selfishly wish them, for your gratification, to quit the realms of immortality, and sojourn again amidst the sins and sorrows of this lower world? Hear their parting words, so soothingly dwelt upon in the beautiful discourse this morning addressed to you, by my esteemed brother. "If ye loved me, ye would rejoice that I say, I go unto my Father,"—"Be ye followers of them who by faith and patience inherit the promises."

And now when by the removal of one so well known, as was our departed friend, death is the common topic of conversation, and this awful word is heard rever-

berated in so many echoes from her tomb, should we not all inquire, with a solemnity and anxiety proportioned to the importance of the subject, whether death will be gain or loss to us? It must, and how soon we know not, be one or the other, the gain of all that can elevate, and dignify, and bless an immortal creature; or the loss of everything we possess in this world, together with everything we can hope for in the next. We all stand every hour upon the verge of eternal ruin, or of an "inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away." Death to-morrow would beggar or enrich us for eternity; would make us poor as the wretch who has not a drop of water to cool his burning tongue; or rich as he who reposing on Abraham's bosom, can look round upon the ineffable glories of the skies, and say, "All these are mine, and mine for ever." Let us ask then if we are really living for Christ, or for ourselves. If the latter, then there remaineth for us nothing but a fearful looking for of fiery indignation which shall consume his adversaries. Thus certainly shall it be found in that day, when we shall behold a God in judgment and a world in flames. Then, when "the earth and all the works therein, shall be burnt up," and everything dear to avarice, to sensuality, and ambition, shall serve but to augment or deck the funeral pile of expiring nature, the man who has lived for Christ shall stand upon the ashes of the globe exultingly exclaiming, "I have lost nothing:" while he who has lived only for self, or sin, or the world, shall, amidst the wreck and ruin around him, send forth the loud wail and utter the dismal lament, "I have lost everything; and with it, I have lost my soul, and lost it for ever."

MINISTERIAL FIDELITY APPLAUDED AND REWARDED.

A SERMON

PREACHED IN CANNON STREET MEETING HOUSE, BIRMINGHAM,

ON SABBATH MORNING, MARCH 22, 1857,

ON OCCASION OF THE

SUDDEN AND LAMENTED DEATH OF THE REV. THOMAS SWAN,

PASTOR OF THE CHURCH IN THAT PLACE.

The servant of Christ who, for twenty-eight years, presided, in the meekness of wisdom, over the church assembling in this place, has suddenly closed his ministry, and has been caught up to his celestial repose and eternal reward. "I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them."

At the request of the widow and bereaved family, and of the deacons of the church, I have consented to become your instructor and comforter on this sad occasion. The selection of the preacher is to be attributed to his long acquaintance and general co-operation with the deceased; and I believe that, had it been possible to consult his wishes, they would have accorded with those of his friends: and the fact of my being a minister of another denomination shows to the world the fellowship of heart and the unity of spirit which still exist among Christians differing on minor points of religious truth.

In seeking for a subject, I have been led by a desire of appropriateness, rather than of novelty, and by a wish that text and sermon should be a description of my departed brother, both as to his character and conduct when upon earth, and his felicity now in heaven; so that upon the very reading of the text it shall at once compel

the exclamation, "He was all that;" and thus his portrait be exhibited to his flock, delineated and set, as it were, in the very words of scripture. And what words could accomplish this end more effectually than those of Christ?

MATTHEW XXV, 21.

Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.

Such is the honourable testimony which, at the last day and before assembled worlds, will be borne by Christ to all who have served him upon earth; a testimony for which, if we are wise enough to know its import and its worth, we might be cheerfully willing not only to resign the richest honours among men, but to forego even the distinctions of angelic natures. To hear pronounced upon us such words, from such lips, on such an occasion, we might gladly wear out, in poverty, labour, and persecution, a Methuselah's term of life, and die at last, amidst agony unutterable, a martyr's death.

I. I shall first delineate the character of a good and faithful servant.

To be a servant of Christ is an honour not to be monopolised for a priesthood by sacerdotal assumption. The dignity, responsibility, and felicity comprehended in this designation, belong to every one who is striving to do the will of God, from the highest archangel in glory, to the youngest and the humblest real Christian upon earth. I will, therefore, first, give a general description of a servant of Christ, applicable alike to the private Christian and the minister of religion. A true

servant of Christ is one who having, by repentance and faith, committed his soul into his hands as a Saviour, yields himself up to him as a Master, in all things to do his will, to obey his commands, and promote his cause; who renounces from that moment his own will as the guide of his conduct, who in all sincerity, carries to him that prayer of converted Saul, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" and who then studies the scriptures, watches providence, observes events, and consults conscience, to find out his will, which, at any risk, cost, sacrifice, hardship, or self-denial, he is prepared to do. He is one who is working in his Master's cause, watching for his Master's coming, waiting for his Master's reception. Such a man, wherever found, in the palace or the cottage, in the pulpit or the pew, is a good and faithful servant of Christ, wears his livery, belongs to his household, and shall receive his reward. Ministers of state, that boast of being the servants of the mightiest monarchs upon earth, on whose counsels and decisions hang the fate of nations and the destinies of the world, are, if not true Christians, immeasurably less honourable in the eye of the Lord Jesus than the meanest of all those that serve him by a life of faith, holiness, and zeal; for such a man is a servant of the King of kings, at the footstool of whose throne archangels find their richest distinctions.

But I go on to give this designation, "a good and faithful servant," a special application to the ministers of religion. Not, indeed, that all ministers of religion, in virtue of their office, irrespective of their doctrine, character, and conduct, are so considered by Christ. No one will be acknowledged by Him as his servant whom he has not himself called to the ministry; and he

calls none to the ministry whom he has not first called by his grace to be a real believer. Conversion and sanctification are the first of all proofs of a divine commission, in the absence of which no human appointment can constitute a man a servant of Christ. No assumed apostolical succession, no rites of ordination, whether Episcopal, Presbyterian, or Congregational, can make that man a servant of Christ, whom Christ had not first made a genuine believer and disciple. The true ministerial livery of Christ's servants is not holy orders, but holy doctrine and holy living. To multitudes, who now wear the former, he will say, on the day of judgment, "I never knew you."

Is any one, even among men, entitled to this character of a good and faithful servant, who does not clearly understand the work he has to do? who is not intimately acquainted with the service for which he is engaged, and the functions he has to discharge? Knowledge of his place and of his duties must lie at the basis of all other excellencies. Without this he may spend, or misspend, his time upon objects which do not belong to him, may do his Master no service, and secure to himself no commendation. This applies most strictly to the minister of the gospel. And what is his work? What has his Master hired him for? What business has he imposed upon him, and what will he require from him? The salvation of souls. So said the apostle in that most impressive, comprehensive language, "They watch for your souls as they that must give account." Many things, we know, may be included in the functions connected with this work; many things made to bear upon it; many collateral benefits arise from it; but this is the great central object of ministerial service, aim, and

endeavour, round which all other things must revolve, and which must impart to them their significance, their importance, and their legitimacy. The object of the pulpit is identical with that of the cross; and he who occupies the former will, if he understand his business, seek precisely the same end by his labours as he who expired upon the latter did by his agonies. All souls are lost by sin. Christ died to redeem them, and the business of his servants is to make known, for their salvation, the wondrous method of their deliverance. A good and faithful servant of Christ, then, is not one who acts as a kind of master of the ceremonies in a system of religious ritualism, nor one who labours to carry out his views of ecclesiastical organisation and government, to the minutest pivot and point of the spiritual machinery; but one who endeavours, by bringing men to repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, to save their souls. The apostle has summed it all up in that instructive verse, "Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus." The man who does not make this the end of his ministry, whatever he may do in the way of literature, science, philosophy, or art, may be a good member of society, and may have claims for its esteem and gratitude, but he is not, cannot be, a good and faithful minister of Christ. I speak of this matter boldly to-day, for that he who lately occupied this pulpit lived, and laboured, and prayed, and preached for that object, you, his church and congregation, are witnesses. How many of you could rise, were it necessary, and testify that you owe your salvation to his affectionate, faithful, and laborious efforts. Yes, and you, whom

unhappily he has not saved, can bear witness of his solicitude to save you. Your blood will not be upon his soul nor required at his hands.

It is essential to the character of a good and faithful servant that he should have a deep sense of the solemnity and importance of his work. To see an official, who is entrusted with great wealth, or with matters of still greater consequence than wealth, conducting his business with a levity and frivolity which would be unbecoming in reference to subjects of the smallest moment, is an unseemly and offensive spectacle. In such a spirit and temper he can do nothing wisely or well. All must be perfunctorily done, and therefore ill done. Who can contemplate without awe the work of the christian minister, if indeed he understands its tremendous import and eternal results? He has to do with matters that stand connected with the eternal destinies of immortal souls, one of which souls its Maker and Redeemer pronounced to be of more worth than the whole world. God and Christ, angels and devils, salvation and damnation, heaven and hell, infinity and eternity, are the themes of his ministry. He has to save perishing immortals from the flaming pit, and elevate them to the celestial city. What would be said of the physician engaged amidst the ravages of the cholera, standing thus amidst dying and dead men, who should exhibit the levity and frivolity of a man at a dancing party or a merry making?

> "'Tis not a cause of small import
> The pastor's care demands,
> But what might fill an angel's heart,
> And filled a Saviour's hands."

I do not wish the ministers of religion disrobed of all

that is joyous in their feeling and general bearing; I do not want to see them moving about society clad in spectral gloom; I do not call for their banishment from the scenes of pure and innocent social festivity; I do not demand that they should sink the man in the minister; I do not desire that even the weight of ministerial responsibility and pastoral solicitude should crush out from their hearts every light and happy emotion. No. But I do want them to appear as men who feel that their position is one of dread importance and awful responsibility; that they stand near the cross of Christ, between heaven and hell; that their business is to save immortal souls from all the bitter pains of eternal death; that their time of working is certainly short, perhaps near its close, and their great Master preparing to call them to account. Who that knew Mr. Swan did not see in him this deep sense of the importance of his work. He was no trifler. He was not one who felt the cares of office to sit lightly upon his spirits. Levity was not in his speech, nor frivolity in his conduct. He was no pulpit jester, no clerical harlequin. Serious though cheerful, grave yet joyous, was his deportment. As it should be in one who, between God and man, negotiates the weighty affairs of judgment and mercy.

Could you call that a good servant, who, whatever was his zeal and activity, neglected to employ for accomplishing his work the means which were appointed by the master, and who substituted others of his own? who chose to exercise his own discretion, and believed that he knew better than his master the circumstances that surrounded him, and could devise a more excellent way for bringing about the desired end?

And do we not see this high presumption, this arrogant ambition, practised by many of our age? What is the Master's method for saving souls, for regenerating the world, and bringing about the universal reign of truth and love, righteousness and peace? "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." This, for aught that appeared to the contrary at the time, was intended for all countries and all ages; despite the vicissitudes, alterations, and improvements of human affairs. Amidst the flux and reflux of the tides of human opinion and human events, this was to remain immoveable, unchangeable, like a rock in the midst of ocean waves. So the apostle understood it when he went to the polished and vicious inhabitants of Corinth, and determined, even among them, to know nothing but Christ and him crucified. It is no matter of surprise that infidel philosophers should tell us that the gospel might have done well enough for the age in which it first came forth; but that it has served its purpose, is now a worn-out system, and must give place to something better suited to this advanced era of mental culture and human progress. But it is a wonder, a lamentation, and a reproach, that men professing to believe in its divine authority, and, in some sense, its paramount obligations, should manifest a wish to cast it in a new mould and fashion it after the shape of modern philosophy. How little do some, even of what we call the evangelical school, sympathise with the noble enthusiasm of the apostle, where he says, "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ;" how little with his Master,

of whom he said, "He endured the cross, and despised the shame." They seem half ashamed of that object which unites the extremes of ignominy and glory; and anxious while retaining the glory to conceal the ignominy. Aware that the cross, to the modern, as well as to the ancient Greek, is foolishness, they are endeavouring to abate his prejudices and conciliate his esteem, if not by abandoning, yet by concealing, those vital truths which are offensive to his taste and obnoxious to his pride. Mistaken men! Vain endeavours! Hopeless attempts! The whole gospel must ever be unpalatable to the pride of human intellect and the corruption of the human heart; and it is not by a half gospel that sinners can be saved and the world regenerated. The gospel, in its genuine simplicity and purity, is the medicine to cure the moral malady of nature, the diseases of the human intellect, heart, and conscience; dilute it, either with philosophy or ritualism, and you deprive it of its efficacy. Fidelity to Christ, therefore, requires not only that we attempt to do his work, but to do it in his way. It includes the same end and the same means he proposed. We must be faithful to our Bible, or we are not faithful to Christ; if we are ashamed of his words, we are ashamed of him. He stands or falls by his truth.

A good servant will adhere to that particular work upon which his master has set him, and which is his special department. He will know his work, and keep to it; and it is in reference to that and not to extraneous matters, which belong to others, rather than to him, that he will receive the testimony of his Lord's approbation. In the present day the ministers of the gospel have many temptations to turn aside from their appointed

special work, and to take up other subjects which lie outside the circle of their official duties. Their work is the salvation of souls, and it is so great an enterprise, requiring such an engrossment of spirit, such an ardour of soul, such an employment of time, and it has to contend against so many counteracting influences, that we do not wonder the apostle said, "Give thyself wholly to these things." And yet literature, science, politics, education, jurisprudence, and even commerce, and the arts, are all clamorous for some portion of their time, their energies, and their labours; and are ever calling them to the platform, the lecturer's chair, and the committee room. To separate themselves wholly from these things they find is difficult, if not impossible; and, perhaps, it would not be desirable if they could. They may sometimes be philosophers among philosophers, scholars among scholars, and citizens among citizens, and may by these means, when sparingly used, increase their usefulness, by increasing their popularity; for some may be induced to follow them from the lecture to the sermon. But, with the salvation of souls upon their minds, their hands, their hearts, with the population, to a great extent, pouring in one great cataract over the rocks of infidelity, immorality, and worldliness, into the gulf of perdition below, it seems as if we should grudge every moment and every energy taken from time and efforts for their eternal welfare and given to the interests of the present world, however important. How forcibly does Doddridge represent this, in his powerful and pathetic sermon "On the guilt and danger of neglecting souls." In addressing his younger brethren, and after granting them sufficient liberty for attending to elegant useful studies, he thus writes:

"It is one thing to taste of these poignant and luscious fruits, and another to feed and live upon them. That true greatness and elevation of mind, which the Gospel is so admirably calculated to produce, would teach a much sublimer science; and if, for the sake of these little things, we neglect to pray for those whom God hath committed to our care, to enquire into their religious state, to pursue them with suitable applications and addresses, the time will come when we shall assuredly own that we dearly purchased the most refined pleasures they could possibly give us. Oh, my brethren, let us consider how fast we are, as it were, posting through this dying life, which God has assigned us, in which we are to manage concerns of infinite moment; how fast we are passing on to the immediate presence of the Lord, to give up our account to Him. You must judge for yourselves, but permit me to say, that for my own part, I would not, for ten thousand worlds, be that man, who, when God shall ask him at last, how he has employed most of his time, while he continued a minister in His church, and had the care of souls, should be obliged to reply, 'Lord I have restored many passages in the ancient classics, and have illustrated many which were before obscure: I have cleared up many intricacies in chronology or geography: I have solved many perplexed cases in algebra: I have refined on astronomical calculations, and left behind me many sheets on these curious and difficult subjects; and these are the employments in which my life has been worn out, while preparations for the pulpit and ministrations in it did not demand more attendance.' Oh, sirs, as for the waters which are drawn from these springs, how sweetly they may taste to a curious mind that thirsts for them, or to an ambitious mind that thirsts for human applause they sometimes procure, I fear there is often reason to pour them out before the Lord, with rivers of penitential tears, as the blood of souls which have been forgotten while these trifles have been remembered and pursued."

This was not the language of ignorance which could not comprehend the beauties of literature or the advantages of science; nor of indolence too lazy to pursue them; nor of dulness that had no taste for them. The man that penned these impressive sentences was himself a fine scholar, an able critic, and possessed of extensive general knowledge, but he estimated all these matters at their proper value, when he thus weighed them in the

scales of the sanctuary, and as compared with a deep solicitude and laborious endeavours for the salvation of immortal souls, pronounced them to be but as the small dust of the balance.

I believe I may say, without fear of contradiction, of your late pastor, that he knew his work and kept to it. You, next to Christ, had his mind, and heart, and will; he gave his whole time to you. The pulpit, rather than the platform, was his resort; and they who wanted to find him had not to seek for him in those places and occupations, to which many feel at liberty to repair, but in his study or in his closet; in the bosom of his family or the chamber of affliction; in his pulpit or in his vestry; in short, in no place where a devout and earnest minister should not be, and in every place where he should be. His motto was, "This one thing I do:" and he acted upon it.

To the character of every faithful servant entire devotedness and unwearied diligence are indispensably necessary. His master's interest must not only have a place, but the highest place, in his heart. He will spare no pains, grudge no labours, shrink from no sacrifice, endure any privation, and exercise any self-denial, to promote his master's welfare. Such will be the conduct also of the good minister of Jesus Christ. The salvation of souls will be ever uppermost in his mind, and interwoven with the whole texture of his thought. In the seclusion of his closet he will wrestle continually and earnestly for the welfare of his flock. In his study he will read, meditate, and accumulate knowledge, not for its own sake only, but to give him power and vigour for saving souls. In the pulpit, his subjects and method of handling them, will make it apparent to all who hear

him that his aim is "to save himself and them that hear him." In his vestry, he will be often waiting to answer the question of the anxious inquirer, "What shall I do to be saved?" In the houses of his flock he will still be watching for souls, and seeking by his example and his conversation to promote their salvation. In the habitations of the poor he will be found dispensing the unsearchable riches of Christ. In the scenes of sorrow he will be seen pouring the balm of consolation into the wounded spirit, and binding up the broken in heart. In the chamber of sickness and at the bed of death he will be beheld inspiring living hopes in dying moments, and helping the expiring combatant, in his last struggles and mortal agony, to utter the victor's shout, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" His work is not confined to the sanctuary, but is extended to every place: it neither begins nor ends with the sermon. He scarcely can allow himself time to recruit his wearied, wasted energies with necessary recreation, feeling that he who labours for souls, is the last man on earth who should excuse himself for neglect, or supineness, and that he who works for eternity has not a moment of time to waste. The value of souls, their danger of being lost, his responsibility in regard to them, and the prospect of the final meeting with his Master, so press upon him, that sometimes in an agony, he exclaims, "Lord, who is sufficient for these things?"

A good and faithful servant will not only rejoice in what he does himself for his master, but, without envy or jealousy, will rejoice in what others do. The artizan in the factory, the servant in the home, and the labourer in the field, if faithful, so far from maltreating, or

hindering other servants in their work, grudging their success, or fretting that they do more than himself, will be glad to see their master's interests by all those means prospering. Our Lord mentions it in one place, as the mark of a bad servant, that he quarrels with and smites his fellows. O, had this verse been always remembered, the pages of ecclesiastical history had not been so blackened with persecution, and stained with the blood of martyrdom as they are. This single verse alone is sufficient to denounce the falsehood and the wickedness of that dreadful system of Antichrist which is steeped in the gore of slaughtered saints. Pure christian zeal can never be identified with sectarianism. A bigoted servant cannot be a good one.

I cannot resist the temptation to quote in this place the beautiful and catholic language of that serene and noble nonconformist, the great John Howe, who, at the time he thus wrote, was suffering with his fellows under the tyranny of the Stuarts.

"A good and faithful servant grudges not that others are less exposed to danger in their work than he, and have that liberty of serving God which he hath not. Let me seriously recommend this disposition of a faithful servant unto my brethren in the ministry. While some have opportunity of serving our great and common Lord, without fear of the interruption and suffering to which we are all liable, and we have reason to judge they do it with sincerity (though we may think they gained their greater liberty by mistake) there can be no more genuine expression of our fidelity and sincere devotedness to our Master's interest, than to behold all the good which we observe done by them. A good and faithful servant is much less apt to smite his fellow servants, or hinder them in their work, unless they will work by his rule and measure, though unprescribed by their Lord himself. If any, of their own private inclination, would have the necessary work of their Lord hindered, and take pleasure in the exclusion of industrious labourers, for their conscientious disuse of things, by their own confession not necessary, good Lord! what spirit are

they of? I understand it not, nor let my soul enter into their secret! I had rather a thousand fold bear their anger than be of their spirit! Would any faithful servant rather wish his master's work should be in parts undone, than done by those he dislikes, upon no more important reason than that their clothes are not, perhaps, of the same colour as his own?"

O that the bigots of all parties would read these words, and catch the spirit of this illustrious dissenter. The man who has no eyes to see, no tongue to acknowledge, and no heart to rejoice, in the work which is done for Christ, because it is not done by himself or his own party, may suppose he is serving his Master; but, notwithstanding his zeal, he is a mere sectary serving himself, and not a good and faithful servant of the Divine Lord.

I believe my departed brother cast no envious, grudging look towards other places of worship. Thankful for what measure of success God gave to him, he had no disposition to disparage other men's labours, or to envy their success.

Should we call that a good and faithful servant who, whatever work he may do, is destitute of sincere love for his master? Does not his goodness, and his fidelity, too, depend on such an affection? Will he, can he, work well and laboriously, and be faithful, in the absence of personal attachment? Without this, will he not be stinted, reluctant, grudging, in his service? What, in the case of the apostle Paul, was the germ of all his virtues, the spring of all his energies, the principle of all his actions, and the prompter of all his sufferings? "The love of Christ constraineth us." What is it that has called out, and sent to the field of conflict, and sustained in sight of the scaffold, the stake, and the lions of the amphitheatre, the noble

army of martyrs? The love of Christ. What was it that Christ laid as the basis of all apostolic ministries, when he commanded Peter to feed his sheep and lambs? Love to him. And what is the first of all ministerial qualifications now? Love to Christ.

It is said that God "maketh his ministers a flame of fire," and this is the sacred element. O! this is what we want, the rekindling of this, a new baptism of fire, and that fire the love of Christ. If the pulpit has lost its power, as many affirm, why is it, but because the love of many has waxed cold? This Divine passion, did it glow with a greater intensity in our breast, would ever supply us all with thoughts that breathe and words that burn. The soul melted at the cross, till all on fire with love to Jesus, and in that state entering the pulpit, must be eloquent and speak with power. The man who drinks in his inspiration at that fount of hallowed rhetoric, must possess its own mighty attraction.

And did not your pastor love his Master? You could almost sooner doubt whether he loved his wife, his children, or his church. You have often heard with what language and what feelings he spoke of Christ. You cannot have forgotten some of the last words he ever addressed to you, when, at the sacramental table, he talked to you of his Master and his cross.

Call you that servant good and faithful, who, while professing to serve his master, is selfishly building up his own interest, employing his time, his energies, his influence, and his master's property, and even his very name, for his own advantage? Ah! here is another test of a good minister of Christ. Does he study and preach, does he live and labour, and, if need be, is he willing to suffer and die, for the glory of Christ? Has

he entered the ministry from no higher motive than the love of ease, the hope of preferment, or the desire of fame? Is self the idol he worships instead of God? Is he athirst for popular applause and ever spreading all his sails to catch the gale? It need not be told, for every body knows it, that a regard to self is the temptation and besetting sin of the pulpit. The preacher is too often incited to rob his Master of his glory, to invest himself with the sinful spoils. He only is the good and faithful servant who can say, with the apostle, "According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death. For me to live is Christ." Who is ever saying, "How can I make them know and remember that, whatever excellence they may give me credit for, I am but a planet revolving in the attraction and reflecting the glory of the Sun of Righteousness?"

There is also another form of selfishness often displayed both by Christians and ministers, and that is sectarianism. A man's party in politics, and his denomination in religion, are himself multiplied, and his zeal for his denomination is zeal for himself, rather than for Christ. The real cause and interest of Christ in our world is something nobler and holier than forms of church polity, or modes of sacramental observance. These may be adjuncts of it, but not its substance. The Son of God did not disrobe himself of the garments of heavenly glory, and humble himself to the death of the cross, merely or chiefly to set up a system of church organization, or establish a round of rites and ceremonies. No: but to redeem men from guilt, depravity,

and hell, and to bring them by the way of faith and love to everlasting glory; and Christ's cause in our world is faith, hope, love; not Episcopacy, Presbyterianism, Congregationalism, or Methodism. And is it not for a lamentation and wonder to see a minister of religion employing his energies and wearing out life in drilling men in a round of self-invented ceremonies, architectural arrangements, and ecclesiastical principles, instead of inculcating as the great theme of his ministry, "Repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ." Such men may be good and faithful servants, but it is of their own constructions, and not of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And will not every servant of Christ, who loves his Master and his Master's cause, find it ever a source of humbling and sorrowful reflection, to think of the omissions, interruptions, and imperfections of his best services? Who that is enlightened to see the glory of Christ, and recollects what He has done and suffered for souls; who that considers the worth of one human soul; who that attempts to measure the height of that word, salvation, and to fathom the depth of that dreadful term, damnation, and to grasp the meaning of eternity; who that remembers the solemnities of his ordination service, his own public surrender to the work of the ministry, his private self-consecration, and his solemn vows; who that knows what his Master requires of him, has seen in him, and will demand from him in the day of scrutiny; who that understands the weight of ministerial obligation, the power of ministerial example, and the extent, for good or for evil, of ministerial influence; and looks back upon his life with the self scrutiny of a man conversant at once with his duties and his defects,

must not lie down in the dust, and with the deepest contrition, exclaim, "Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord. Pardon, O pardon, in thy great mercy, not only my personal, but my official transgressions"? With all the joy and thankfulness with which the preacher of this morning sometimes thinks of the mercy vouchsafed to him by his Master during a pastorate of almost two and fifty years, there is mingled a deep, and humbling, and mortifying sense of his manifold imperfection, and no feast of love and respect at any time spread for him by the kindness of his too-partial friends is ever without the bitter herbs which are supplied by his own conviction of unworthiness. With such a Master, such a cause, and such work, what manner of persons ought we to be? and if regrets can enter heaven, (as perhaps they will, in such manner as will not materially interfere with its bliss,) what minister of the gospel, and what Christian, will not regret they had not loved their Master more, and served him better?

Could'st thou speak to us, my departed brother, from the invisible world, now that thou hast gazed with rapture on the glory of thy Lord, and seen the wonders of heaven and eternity, with what a humbling sense of thine own imperfection would'st thou address us, and with what a reproving, stimulating, voice would'st thou speak to us of ours!

Before I take up the second division of the subject, I would remark that though a good and faithful servant will generally be a successful one, and that his success will be in some measure proportioned to his fidelity, yet our Lord says nothing of the former, and speaks exclusively of the latter, just because duty is ours and success is His. Had He said, "Well done good and successful

servant," His words would have carried hopelessness and distress to the hearts of myriads of devoted men, who amidst labours more abundant, yet amidst opposition and difficulty, defeat and discouragement, fightings without and fears within, have been faithful even unto death, and yet in their own opinion have achieved small success. The reward will not be in proportion to success, but the means we have used to obtain it. "Every man shall receive his own reward, according to his own labour," not according to his success. "We are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, both in them that are saved and in them that perish." "Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall we be glorious in the eyes of the Lord." It may also be added that neither is it said, "Thou good and aged servant." True it is, that long life is a still severer test of fidelity. Through what temptations has the man of three-score years and ten passed, unknown, at least in number, to the man of thirty! And if reward be proportioned to length as well as fidelity of service, and to continuance as well as commencement, the honour conferred upon the veteran, provided he has been faithful, will be richer than that which is given to the soldier who dies in early years. Yes, but the latter shall be accepted not merely according to what he did, but what he wished and intended to do. "Be thou faithful unto death and thou shalt receive the crown of life," whether that death be late or early. And it is undoubtedly true that many of God's most faithful servants have been called early from the field, and in some cases have done more work in a short life than others have in a long one. A man's life is to be measured rather by the work he does than the years he spends. Oh! what did not Samuel Pearce effect in

the few years he laboured on this spot? What did not M'Cheyne accomplish in Scotland? What did not Spencer do at Liverpool, in two short years of labour? Here, in all those cases, was fidelity unto death, though the sepulchre was so near their pulpit.

II. I am now to represent the faithful servant's reward. "Well done thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

In this majestic and condescending sentence is comprised the language of eulogy, investiture, and welcome. "Well done." Again I say what an ineffable honour to hear such words, from such lips, on such an occasion. It is grateful to us all, upon the completion of an act, to receive a testimony of commendation from our fellow-creatures. Our bosoms swell, if not with pride, yet with exultation, to hear them cry, "Well done." What a glory irradiates the man who stands in the high places of the nation's councils, and seated in the British Senate hears his country, through the Speaker, say, for some act of public service, "Well done." But what is this compared with such an encomium from the lips of Christ? What can be more enrapturing and reviving to the heart of a good man than that the Lord of heaven and earth should say to him, "Well done"; to have gained, as Enoch did, the testimony that we have "pleased God;" and to hear Him say to us as He did to Moses, "Thou hast found grace in my sight"? And then to have this said to the faithful servant so solemnly, so publicly; to have it judicially declared in that day, when angels and men shall all be present; to hear his character declared, his doom pronounced, his

destiny fixed for ever then, when the calumniators that slandered him, the ignorant that misjudged him, the wits that made him the subject of their ridicule, the profane that treated him as the theme of their song, the philosophers that selected him as the object of their scorn, and the persecutors that considered him as the victim of their cruelty, will all be present, for then shall the Saviour put forth His servant and cover him with glory by those blessed words, "Well done," while angels and the spirits of just men made perfect, shall catch the sound, and the eulogy shall run along the lines of glorified immortals, and make ten thousand echoes. For such a reward a succession of martyrdoms, if that were possible, might be encountered and endured without reluctance or regret.

Oh! to have all the fears we now sometimes entertain, regarding the acceptableness of our labours, dissipated in a moment, and hopes which we now sometimes scarcely dare to cherish, more than realized! to have all the mistakes which others now make, concerning us, corrected; their false judgments of our conduct reversed; their censures rebuked; their calumnies answered, and our righteousness brought forth as the light, and our judgment as the noon-day, by Christ himself! for him to become our apologist, our vindicator, our approving judge! for Him to say, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" "Who is he that condemneth? it is God that justifieth!" Before angels, men, and devils, for Him to say, "Well done, my good and faithful servant!" Oh, unutterable honour! Oh, ineffable bliss.

But here is the language of investiture, "Thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler

over many things." This is an intimation so singular, so wonderful, that I scarcely know how to interpret it, and scarcely dare attempt it.

There is something intended in this language beyond personal dignity, purity, rest, and felicity; it seems to import social distinction among the celestial host, proportioned to the service we render to God on earth, and the diligence with which it is discharged. Is it irrational to conceive of heaven as an organised community, and where, as everything else in heaven is perfect, so will be its organisation? Through the whole domain of God, as far as we are acquainted with it, order, arrangement, dependence, subordination, characterise His work: and shall not these be found in heaven? Scripture tells us that they will. Heaven is a city, a kingdom, a family, not a celestial mob, a mere glorified throng or multitude. There are in heaven, "thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers;" which import diversities of rank, station, and service. These diversities of rank, station, and service, are, or at least may be, the different degrees of glory of which Scripture speaks with an affirmation, as regards the existence of degrees, whatever may be their kind, as clear, distinct, and positive, as of anything else pertaining to the celestial state. And can there be any thing more natural, more wise, or just in itself, or more encouraging or stimulating to us, than that they who serve Christ with greatest purity of motive, greatest ardour of mind, greatest diligence of action, and greatest sacrifice and suffering, upon earth, should be raised to the highest posts in heaven? Is it not natural that they should be nearest their beloved Master above, who did most for him below; that Paul or John should be higher in glory than Luther or Cranmer, White-

field or Wesley; and that these latter should be as much above the most devoted servants of Christ of modern times, as these most devoted servants will be above the lukewarm and indolent? And is it not clear that this superiority will not merely be conferred as matter of reward, but be the natural consequence and result of the service itself, just as it is on earth, where those who, in a large establishment are most diligent and most skilful in their master's employ, are the most fitted for, as well as the most deserving of, the highest stations in his vast concern? And does the faithful pastor, then, when he lays down the burden of his office, and bids farewell for ever to its anxieties and cares, retain in any form its sacred honours and enduring relation to those happy spirits, which it was his felicity to bring into the path of life, and to cheer, to urge, and animate on their way? Will that tie which binds him to his converts here, be there dissolved for ever? We do but suggest the idea, we cannot follow and confirm it.

But, here is also the language of welcome: "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." The faithful servant enters into joy. When the dark shady vale of labour, care, solicitude, fear, and grief, is past, the redeemed soul emerges into a world of cloudless felicity, just as the traveller who, in a beautiful country, having passed through a dark, gloomy, and dangerous defile, comes suddenly, at its end, into an earthly paradise. But this is not all, for it is the kind of joy that makes it what it is, it is the joy of the Lord. This signifies not only the joy of which Christ is the object, though this of itself must be rapturous delight. "Father," said He, "I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory;" and it

seemed enough to satisfy the soul of the disciple, that "leaned upon His bosom," that He should "see Him as He is." It signifies not only the joy of which He is the Author, (though this is a vast idea, for when He undertakes to fill us with happiness, what must that happiness be) but it is a joy of which He is the subject; His own delight. Christ is the subject of joy; both His divinity and His humanity have not only a capacity for happiness but are replenished with it. He is not only the great, but the blessed God. He is an infinite fountain of bliss, full for Himself, and overflowing to His faithful servants. The apostle, in speaking of Christ's humiliation, says, "for the joy that was set before Him, He endured the cross, despising the shame." That joy arose from the glory that would redound to God, the salvation that would result to countless millions of immortal souls, and the honour that would be reflected upon Himself, by His being "obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." That joy still fills his soul; and into that joy, His own joy, His faithful servant enters. Amazing thought! it is as if He said, "Come, my faithful servant, you have had fellowship with me in my sufferings, and been made conformable to me in my death, now come and have fellowship with me in my glory and joy, come and be a partaker of my own bliss. We have sorrowed together, we will now be glorified together. You have agonised with me in Gethsemane, you shall now exult with me in Paradise. You have been crucified with me, you shall now be crowned with me. One joy shall be common to us both. My delight shall be yours. I will fill you with my own bliss. What I rejoice in, you shall rejoice in." Again, I say, Amazing! Rapturous! Ineffable! Inconceivable!

Oh, what a bliss awaits the faithful servant of God! Divine; for it is the joy of Christ. Perfect; for it is the joy of Christ, who knows not grief, a fulness of joy which leaves no room for the smallest intermixture of sorrow. Lofty and sublime, produced by nothing mean, trivial, and insignificant, but by objects which justify and commend it; for it is the joy of Christ. Enhanced by contrast, the joy of victory after terrible conflict; of elevation after depression; of life after death; of honour after degradation; of incalculable riches after poverty; for it is the joy of Christ, to whom all this appertained. It is uncloying delight, ever satisfying but never surfeiting; for it is the joy of Christ. It is eternal joy, pleasure for evermore, a felicity never checked by the gloomy apprehension that it is a happiness too great to last; for it is the joy of Christ.

Into this joy the faithful servant is invited to enter; it does not merely enter into him, but he enters into it: an expression which signifies the plenitude of his right, as invited by Christ, so that no voice will ever say to him, "How camest thou in hither," and the plenitude of his felicity. He is not so much to possess it, as to be possessed by it. He is to be absorbed by it, to lose himself in it, and be swallowed up of it for ever and ever. What a comprehensiveness of honour and of bliss is contained in these few words in which the Great Master will pronounce the sentence of every good and faithful servant.

The Rev. Thomas Swan was born at Manchester, of Scottish parents. He lost his father when a boy, and signalised himself by his filial piety, while yet a youth

of sixteen, by supporting his widowed mother, who, in consequence of the misfortunes in trade of her husband, was left but ill-provided for; and, in after years, even when others, still more nearly related to him, multiplied their claims upon him, he continued his protection and support to that venerable woman. It was his happiness to be early converted to God, and, though so young, was the priest of his widowed mother's little circle at home. It was not, however, till the age of twenty-five that he disentangled himself from secular pursuits, and consecrated his life to the work of the Christian ministry. He received an appropriate education, in the Baptist College, at Bristol, then under the superintendance of that holy, amiable, and sound theologian, Dr. Ryland. He afterwards went to the University of Edinburgh for two sessions, at the recommendation of his very intelligent friend and pastor, the Rev. Christopher Anderson. On completing his studies, he was selected to become professor of theology in the College at Serampore, under the direction of the illustrious Baptist missionaries, Carey and Marshman. Not finding this situation all he expected, he relinquished it and returned to England. On his leaving Serampore, he received the following testimony of respect and affection from Dr. Carey: "By desire of the committee, I now write to say, that we unfeignedly regret your resolution to leave us, to whom personally you are very dear, and to the college in which your labours have been decidedly useful."

Soon after his arrival in England, Mr. Swan was cordially elected by the church to succeed my venerable and excellent friend, Mr. Birt. Here, for twenty-eight

years, he has been the esteemed and beloved pastor of an affectionate and devoted people, a longer term of service than had been granted to any one of the former pastors.

As a proof of the efficiency of his labours in this place, I may state that during his pastorate more than twelve hundred members have been added to the church, a degree of success which is granted to comparatively few of God's servants. To this success it may be truly said that his high, moral, and spiritual excellencies essentially contributed; for I am persuaded, from long and extensive observation, that a minister of Christ does more by a blameless reputation, and an affectionate heart, than many are perhaps aware of. Genius and talent, without these, can do little; but these, without genius, may, with tolerably respectable talent, do much. Character gives weight to words. Talents without it have little power. It was beautifully said of Abraham, that God found his heart faithful to himself: the same may be said of our departed friend, and here was the foundation of all his other excellencies. His piety was as unsuspected and manifest as his morality in the minutest things was unblemished and conspicuous. The finger of scorn never pointed at him; the tongue of slander never assailed him; the serpent's tooth of malice never bit him. Few men have been left to the more quiet enjoyment of a blameless and harmless life. Several things in addition to his unspotted piety and sterling integrity contributed to this. There is no shield against annoyance more effectual than love. The man who loves is sure to be loved in return. Mr. Swan's affectionate

disposition defended him from many inflictions which men of more rugged and prickly dispositions bring upon themselves. His candid, unsuspicious, and kindly disposition may, perhaps, in some cases, have exposed him to the danger of forming friendships unworthy of his own excellence and sterling integrity. There was a kind of childlike simplicity about him, which, by its complaisant smile and gentle speech, won your heart at once. And his prudence preserved him, in most cases, from offences which others bring upon themselves.

What he was as a preacher you who have heard him almost thirty years know full well. As to his doctrine, the best that I can say of it, and the least that I will say, is, that it was the sound Protestantism of the Reformers; the rich theology of the Puritans and Nonconformists; and what is higher still, it was Paul's doctrine of Christ crucified. The cross, the cross, in all its atoning efficacy, and all its justifying and sanctifying power, was his great, his constant theme. It is worthy of notice, that he had recently transcribed, and in November last preached, the first sermon he ever delivered in this place, on that doctrine of the gospel, by which, as Luther said, the church of Christ must stand or fall, I mean justification by faith; and this was the sermon he was about to deliver when seized with the fatal attack. There, at the cross he began; at the cross he stood; at the cross he died. But his sermons were carefully prepared, and did not consist of a few crude hasty thoughts collected at the end of a week spent in indolence or trifling. There was a peculiarity in his manner, which, in addition to his reading his sermons,

a bad practice (becoming, I am sorry to say, very common amongst our young ministers), rendered him less popular than he otherwise would have been.

As a pastor, he was, I believe, a pattern to most of us. His interest was not exclusively confined to his own church, but whatever else was included in what he considered the circumference of his duty; this was as it ought to be with us all, the centre of the circle. It is at once the duty of every pastor to consider his own flock the first object of his solicitude, his care, and his labours; and yet without great firmness of purpose and vigilant care, in this age of public spirit, it is his temptation and his danger to make it the last and the least. It becomes us all to remember, that it is the flock committed to our oversight that will be required of us in the day of judgment, and nothing then will be admitted in excuse for neglecting this.

I may refer, for a moment, to his amiable, affable, and unaffected kindness towards his brethren. Never was a man more divested of all that could repel or terrify. He was a brother among brothers, and if at any time he ventured, as he sometimes did, to hint a fault or a failing (he did so to myself, at our last missionary breakfast meeting), it was in so good humoured, artless, and playful a manner, that the very reproof was amusing, and it was quite impossible to be displeased. It is now to me a pleasurable recollection that I have lived on terms of undisturbed friendship with him during the whole of his residence in this town, and though I may, perhaps, occasionally have seen some little mistakes, they never interrupted or embittered our intercourse.

This is not the time or place, even if I had the

disposition, which I have not, microscopically, or censoriously, to hunt for imperfections. These, of course, could be found in the most perfect of characters on earth, even by a friendly scrutiny; and were I to attempt to represent him as an altogether faultless character, I should seem to see him darting upon me a reproving look, and hear him addressing to me the language of rebuke. He is now one of the spirits of just men made perfect, and no one will be perfect till they join that blessed company. And O, what a hope, and what a mercy it is, that we shall be perfect then.

After this manner he lived, laboured, and died among you. No: in one particular I must correct that expression. His Master did not permit him to die among you, but met him away from his home and his flock. Yet where is not a good man equally near to his rest, and equally fit for it? He may be surprised by the suddenness of his death, but is never unready. The harbinger of his decease came in the presence of you all, in the seizure of last year, when you saw him borne from your assembly amidst your grief and dismay. From that attack he never fully recovered. His late journey to Scotland was one of benevolence, and was very appropriate to his office as a minister of Christ, since it was to solicit aid for the Scholastic Institution in this neighbourhood for the sons of ministers. It had been his expressed and somewhat chivalrous desire to die in his pulpit, thinking it an honour to fall like a warrior on the field of conflict. God sometimes grants even these wishes of his servants.

That paragon of piety and prince of commentators, Archbishop Leighton, often expressed a desire, with submission to the will of God, that he might die from

home, and at an inn, deeming such a place suitable to the character of a christian pilgrim, to whom the world is an inn, a place of accommodation by the way, not his home. He also thought that the care and concern of friends were apt to entangle and discompose the dying saint; and that the comparative unfeeling attendance of strangers weaned the heart from the world, and made heaven appear more attractive and desirable. The good Archbishop obtained his wish. Having business in London, he journeyed thither, and died at an inn, with none of his relatives near him. Our beloved brother had engaged to preach in Glasgow, to a congregation which at present worships in a public secular building. He went, accompanied by a married daughter, with willing steps and cheerful heart to the scene of his intended labour. He took his seat, in his usual health, on the platform. A psalm was given out, and, while waiting to occupy the chair from which he was to deliver his message, the invisible messenger, with noiseless wing, from the eternal world arrived with a commission to seal up his testimony, and to bid him to the presence of the Great Master. The blood suddenly rushed to the head, and flooded the brain. He rose calmly, yet in agony, from his place, retired with his daughter into an anteroom, and, being seated, said he had never known such pain in his head before. "Father," exclaimed this devoted daughter, "you cannot, must not preach." The ruling passion strong in death, responded, "I must; and if I cannot see my notes," for the power of vision was then failing, "I will preach without them." You see how bent he was on his Master's work to the last moment of conscious existence. As if struggling against "the last enemy"

for one more opportunity to do service for Christ, he staggered back to the platform; but in vain. The Master had said, "It is finished; my good and faithful servant, thy work is done." He rose a second time, and retired to return no more. Insensibility, incoherence followed. He was borne to an inn opposite the place of assembly. Medical skill and attention procured from several physicians were useless. He was not to be brought back to earth from the gate of heaven. The curtain had already dropped over his intellectual powers; and, after a few hours of living death, his emancipated spirit left its prostrate habitation, and emerged from stupor and darkness into light, life, and immortality. How striking an illustration of those words of the Master, "Blessed is that servant whom his Lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing." How sublime to go, without any intermediate stages of decrepitude and decay, direct from the pulpit to the grave; to lay down his life and labours together; to find the last effort of piety not completed when the reward was bestowed; to be crowned like a conqueror on the field, and to raise his song of triumph in the very midst of the conflict. While the panic-stricken congregation retired with a kind of awful dismay, at once both shocked and grieved; to him what a surprise and a delight must it have been to find himself so suddenly in the presence of his divine Lord, to hear his words of welcome, and to see a smile on his divine countenance; and thus, in the rapture of that abundant entrance into glory, that first moment in heaven, to find and feel a compensation for the dangers and the toils of a whole life-time of service. Let me now, amidst your sorrows and regrets, call upon you to remember with thankfulness how long he was

spared, and what work he accomplished, and that at last he was not enfeebled by age, nor laid aside by sickness, nor had his faculties sustained the smallest diminution. He was not met, as was said of another, by death amidst the melancholy reflections and sorrowful forebodings of a decrepit old age, but just at the evening hour, when the shadows of advancing twilight had scarcely begun to deepen on his path, just before the winter of life, when its fruit was fully ripened, but its decay was as yet unperceived. The suddenness of his departure, whatever surprise and shock it occasioned to his relations and friends, was to him a translation. May I not apply to his case the pathetic language, which one eloquent friend of my own used in reference to the decease of another endeared ministerial brother? "he felt not the disruption of those tender bonds, by which his affectionate heart was united so closely to all who were associated with him, in whatever relation; how otherwise would that heart have clung to the companion of his pilgrimage, endeared as she was by long and faithful attachment, and a singular conformity of habits and feeling to his own, which had made her peculiarly a help-meet for him. How would his tender heart have shrunk from the last embrace of his children. How would he have recoiled from the last adieu of those friends whom he had attracted by his blameless and amiable conduct. But all this was mercifully spared him. The bitterness of death was past before the cup was tasted, and he was through the dark valley and the iron gate ere he knew he was approaching them."

To the afflicted widow I express my tenderest sympathy, and feel confident that, as the living representative of their late pastor, the church, by their kindness

and attention to her, will express in every suitable manner, their grateful recollections of the services rendered by her husband, during a pastorate of twenty-eight years. And may all his children know the God of their father and so follow his example, so remember his instructions, and so anxiously seek to have his prayers for them answered, that they may join him at last in that happy world, where those who are united by the ties of grace shall meet to part no more.

May the church, so suddenly and so unexpectedly plunged into the destitution, the sorrows, and the perplexities, of a flock without a shepherd, be enabled to comport themselves as becomes a community of christians. There should be deep submission to the will of God, and an unhesitating, unshaken, conviction that this event is from the Lord, and that whatever veil of mystery is over it, there is a wisdom concerned in it that can make no mistake, and a goodness that can perpetrate no wrong. May they remember that though the lamp in their sanctuary is put out, there is One walking among the golden candlesticks, whose hand has caused the extinction and can light up another flame. This is the time for the exercise of their confidence in their divine Lord, who is head over all things to His Church. Say, then, my dear friends, with the poet,

> "Yet in the midst of death and grief,
> This thought our sorrow shall assuage,
> Our Father and our Saviour live,
> Christ is the same through every age."

Your pulpit is vacant, but not Christ's throne. The preacher is gone, but the Bible remains. The pastor is dead, but the Chief Shepherd lives. The stream is dried up, but the fountain still flows. When the sera-

phic Pearce was called so early away, He gave you the able and judicious Morgan; and when, after so short a pastorate, he was removed by illness, He sent you the wise and energetic Birt; and when that veteran was laid aside, He called our departed friend from India to fill your pulpit, and to watch for your souls. And think you that, now when another monument is to be placed on your wall, and another trophy of death is to hang up here its gloomy emblems, the great Master of assemblies will forsake you? Confide in your deacons; may they confide in each other, and in you; and all of you together confide in God. Give yourselves to prayer. A praying church will never be a deserted one. More than half a century I have known this congregation. My acquaintance with it commenced when, while waiting for the completion of this place of worship, it was united with my own, and my excellent and esteemed friend Mr. Morgan and I were, for nearly a year, the joint occupants of my pulpit.* What changes have those two and fifty years produced in you and me. Your fathers, where are they? Those excellent and venerable men who then constituted the diaconate? Gone; all

* At this point of the discourse an incident occurred which gave a deep interest to the service, and produced a profound sensation on the audience. As the chapel was excessively crowded, Mr. Morgan had taken his seat in the pulpit at the commencement of the sermon, and remained in it till the close. Mr. James on his allusion to his former association with this venerable man, turned round and grasped his hand, and addressed him with great and visible emotion in the following strain. "My beloved friend and brother, it is one of the most tender and touching incidents of this solemn and mournful occasion, to find ourselves, amidst the closing scenes of our ministry, sharing again the same pulpit, and reviving the happy recollections of our association at the beginning of our career. God be praised for the grace that has kept those grey hairs of yours from being

gone; long since gone; and they have scarcely left a single lineal representative in your church. How have these pews been again and again emptied to fill the sepulchre, to swell the congregation of the dead, and blessed be God, not only so, but to people the realms of glory. What a tide has been setting in hence upon the shore of eternity, and how many have gone to that world which is ever drawing up to itself all that is holy upon earth. I rejoice, however, that through all the vicissitudes which have come over both you and me in this long period, no change has taken place in our Christian friendship; and it is with a melancholy satisfaction that I am in your pulpit this morning, to bear this public tribute of respect to the memory of your late pastor, and to show to the world, I repeat, that our difference of opinion on a sacramental observance, makes no difference of feeling towards each other as Christians, as it made none between my departed brother and myself.

Consider, I implore you, the solemn responsibility which such a pastorate as you have lost entails upon you, a responsibility inferior only to that of the pastorate

soiled by anything unworthy of your character and office, and has not allowed anything to cause a blush of shame to come over that countenance now wrinkled by age: and though he has not permitted you to bless the church in your very advanced years, by the public teaching of your voice, he still continues you among us, the relic of what you were, to guide us by your example. Pleasant was our intercourse in by-gone years, sweeter still will it be hereafter, when we shall join our departed friend in the skies. Oh, my brother, what glories await us in the upper world, and at our time of life, cannot be far from us. I do not, I am sure, misinterpret your feelings, when I express my confidence that though no longer able yourself to minister in the sanctuary, you rejoice in the continued services of him who now addresses you."

itself. You need not tremble for him, but you should tremble for yourselves. He is gone to give his account, you must follow to give yours, and, perhaps, as suddenly as he did. You have often met him in this place; you will never meet him again here. Your next interview will be at the bar of God, where you will hear him utter words, the truth of which you will not be able to gainsay, "I have not shunned to declare unto you the whole counsel of God, and I take you to record, I am clear from the blood of your souls." What! shall he who loved you, lived for you, laboured for you, and who would have been willing to die for you, rise up in judgment against you at the last day? Shall he whose wrestlings with you, you have so often heard, come as a swift witness against you, amidst the terrible solemnities of the final judgment? Are there any, who, during his life and under his ministry, remained unconverted to God, who have stifled convictions, broken reiterated promises, and solemn vows, and are now reproached by their own consciences, for not having profited by the ministry of a man so earnest to save them, but whose voice they shall hear no more? Let them resolve that his sudden death, his funeral obsequies, his coffin, his grave, shall, by God's grace, be the means of doing that for them which his long labours never accomplished, even their saving conversion to God. Thus the triumphs and trophies of his ministry will be erected on his very sepulchre; and the knowledge that his death was the means of your salvation, will add to the raptures with which he will hear his Lord say to him at the last day, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

CHRISTIAN PHILANTHROPY:

AS EXEMPLIFIED IN THE

LIFE AND CHARACTER OF THE LATE JOSEPH STURGE, ESQ.

A SERMON,

DELIVERED IN CARRS LANE CHAPEL,

ON SUNDAY MORNING, MAY 22, 1859.

It is not my wont to enter so largely in funeral discourses, into the delineation of character as I have done in that which, on my own responsibility, I now offer to the public; for indeed how rarely does such a character come before us for analysis! On the present occasion I was not unwilling to exhibit what I conceive to be the gospel of our salvation, in connection with one of the most beautiful exemplifications of its moral power. I believe the doctrine of God's love in redemption when understood and really believed, is the most practical subject of the New Testament; and my aim in this discourse is to demonstrate it by an extended review of the life and labours of Mr. Sturge, than whom I have rarely known any one whose history was better suited for such a purpose.

J. A. J.

Romans v, 6–8.

For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

The marvellous love of God in giving his only begotten Son for the salvation of our lost and guilty world is the central truth of divine revelation, around which all other truths revolve in glorious harmony. Prophets predicted it, apostles recorded it, and angels celebrated it; while millions of redeemed sinners on earth, and "the spirits of just men made perfect" in heaven, find it the joy of their hearts, and make it the boast of their tongues. It will fill immensity with glory, and eternity with praise. It is the apostle's design, in the verses of the text, to enlarge our conception, and to heighten our admiration, of it, by comparing, or rather contrasting, it with the most signal exercise of human affection. His meaning may be thus briefly expressed. "It is a very rare occurrence, an event which scarcely ever happens, but which may be conceived of as possible, for some one to be so impressed with the importance to society of the continued life of an eminent philanthropist, as to be

willing to die in his stead. But it is utterly inconceivable that any one would die for an enemy, who had calumniated his character and destroyed his property and happiness. But God commendeth his love towards us in that, while notwithstanding our whole race were enemies to him by wicked works, rebels against his government, and traitors to his throne, he gave Christ to die for us."

The disciple whom Jesus loved, in one of the simplest, and at the same time sublimest, expressions that ever flowed from the pen of inspiration itself, declared that God is love. Where, in all the pages, I will not say of the Pagan mythology, but of the "divine Plato" himself, do we find a description of Deity so pure, so lofty, so sublime, and beautiful, and withal so encouraging, as this? Idolatry in all the images it ever made, and philosophy in all its loftiest speculations, never reached such a conception. Among all the temples or statues of Greece and Rome, where do we find one consecrated to benevolence? The gods of classic story were little else than human passions and vices exalted, as Foster says, to heaven, to be invested with Olympian charms, and to descend thence with a divine authority to make men wicked.

Is not this representation of God, by the apostle, a proof of the inspiration of his writings, an internal evidence, and a strong one too, of the truth of revelation? Whence, but from heaven, could the fisherman of Galilee obtain a conception so lofty, and so entirely beyond the reach of unaided reason. "The world by wisdom knew not God." How came it that uneducated Jews could rise in their views of deity so far above the sages of Greece? How will infidels acount for this? Mistaken

men, on what are you intent in attempting to deprive the miserable children of Adam of that source of consolation, and that model of their character, which are both found in this exhibition of the eternal God? Why should you, not only endeavour to prove Christianity to be false, but apparently wish to believe it so? Is not its God love, its doctrines love, and its very duty love? One should think that while a spark of benevolence remained in your hearts, you must desire, intensely desire, that Christianity should be true, for the beneficent aspect with which it smiles on this divided, distracted, and miserable world.

The love of God, like his other attributes, was immanent in his nature from everlasting. When he dwelt alone in the ages of eternity, and the solitude of immensity, the sole object of his own contemplation, the source of his own happiness, and the theatre of his own glory, he was love, and power, and holiness; but even He thought it not good to be alone in the universe, and to confine his attributes within the depths of their divine essence. And, as he displayed his power in creation, so he manifested his love in redemption. The light of the sun is always the same, but it shines brightest at noonday. So the love of God in itself was always the same, but it is most resplendent to us in the work of our salvation. His goodness shines in the realms of nature and the domain of providence, but its noontide splendour is in the scheme of redemption; hence one apostle says, "he commendeth his love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us," as if no other view of it were comparatively worth our notice. And another apostle says, "in this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only

begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him." As if every other display of it were partially hidden, and this only its full revelation. In creation we see only what he has done, not all he could do. But in redemption we behold not only what love has done, but the uttermost that it could do. It has come out there not in dawn, or twilight, but in full orbed glory, in meridian splendour.

I wish it to be particularly observed, it is the love of God that is spoken of in the text; of God the Father, as distinguished from Christ. Much erroneous representation of this subject has found its way into our hymns, and into our popular theology, according to which all the love displayed in our redemption was found exclusively in the heart of Christ. The death of Christ, and the important doctrine of the atonement, have been so injudiciously set forth as to represent the Father all wrath, till appeased by the intervention and sacrifice of the Son; as if the plan of mercy was originated by the heart of Jesus, and merely accepted by his eternal Father. Whereas the beneficent scheme was the offspring of the Father's wisdom and grace. The true scriptural representation is, the Father originates the plan, the Son executes it, and the Spirit applies it; yet in each act there is a concurrence of mind, will, and operation, in the sacred mysterious three. "Who by searching can find out God? who can find out the Almighty to perfection? It is higher than heaven, what can we do? deeper than hell; what can we know?" Faith, standing before the oracle, hears in silent awe the response, bows her head, adores, and says, "Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief."

But let us now go from the fount of infinite love in

the heart of God, to that mighty stream of it which has flowed down from heaven to earth, and of which it may be said, "everything liveth where the river cometh." This consists of the incarnation, life, and death of Christ, for the salvation of the world.

I. We may notice what is said of the period when Christ appeared. "In due time he died for the ungodly." It was the time marked out by prophecy, the time, when for its enormous wickedness, both as regards the Jews and Gentiles, the world needed his coming; the time, when the insufficiency of human reason to reform and save mankind had been demonstrated by the rise and spread of Grecian philosophy. "After that in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." And it was at a time when the expectation of a deliverer prevailed throughout the eastern world, as poets sang in melodious numbers, and philosophers indicated in dark sayings. He could not have come before, because God's decree had fixed his advent; he could not tarry longer, or he would not have been the Messiah. The proof of his divine mission hung, among other things, upon the time of his coming.

II. We may notice what is said of the condition of those for whom Christ came. They were "without strength," that is, without any ability to save themselves: totally helpless and hopeless in regard to any means of obtaining justification, making any atonement, or turning away the wrath of God, by their own works, or renewing their own fallen and corrupt nature. They lay, exposed to the divine displeasure on account of sin, and unable either to defend themselves or escape.

They are also represented as "ungodly." This is the case with all the world: they are not only without God, but unlike to him, and opposed to him. And then, by another term, they are called "sinners." This is intended as a description, not of any portion of mankind merely, but of the whole human race. "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God." "There is none righteous, no, not one: there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one." Away then with all the fine and false notions of human nature which many hold and proclaim. As an intellectual creature, man is a noble being; as a moral one, corrupt and degraded. We admit that there may be in some persons many amiable qualities; much individual, domestic, and social excellence; much that is a source of pleasure to themselves, and useful to their fellow creatures; much that has the semblance of moral excellence. Yes, in the wilderness of unrenewed nature there may be, and are, many wild flowers of natural beauty, but they are not set in the garden of the Lord by his own planting, nor will they, unless regenerated, flourish in the paradise above. By human depravity, then, we do not mean that every man is bad as he can be, or that there is no difference now, and will be no difference hereafter, in the condition of the virtuous and vicious. But what we do mean is that all have lost the original righteousness of man at his creation; all are conceived in sin and are brought forth in iniquity; all are enemies to God by wicked works; are without God in the world, and under the curse of his violated law. Awful thought! all by nature and practice are sinners!

This is a world of sinners. A dark shadow of depravity and of guilt falls upon and covers the whole human race. If Christ died for all, then were all dead. The most virtuous man in existence as really needs a Saviour as the most vicious. And the deep, humbling, and penitential conviction of this is the first step towards salvation. The gospel is a moral remedy, and till we feel our malady we shall never be solicitous to apply the means of cure. And here is the simple and obvious reason why such multitudes in this christian land live in lamentable neglect of the salvation of their souls, they feel not the awful disease of their sinful nature, and the actual transgressions to which it has given rise.

III. The text informs us of the precise object for which the love of God sent Christ into the world "to die for sinners." Salvation is every where ascribed to the death of Christ. This, it might have been supposed, would have prevented all controversy on the design of his mission. He came to be not merely a teacher, or an example, or a martyr. Had teaching by his discourses, or his example, been the only or chief design of his mission, would he have remained thirty years in the privacy of Nazareth, and have given only three to the public? He was all this, but he was infinitely more; he was a Saviour, and the full import of that glorious term can be found only in his cross. Why are we every where directed to his death, to his cross, to his blood, for salvation, but to teach us that the design of his mission was to redeem and not only to reform? We are no where said to be saved by his life, except in one place, where it means his living to complete, by his intercession, what he had achieved by his death. This

is stated in the verses following the text, where it is said that Christ died for sinners, the just for the unjust; the words import that he did so vicariously. It is plain from other parts of Scripture, as well as from the context, that it is meant he died in their stead; that he died as their substitute. Perhaps, however, the use of the preposition "for" would not of itself demonstrably prove this. A man may die for his country without dying as its substitute; and yet he is in a vague sense his country's substitute in the field of battle. The illustration which the apostle employs in the text puts the idea of substitution beyond all doubt; for when he speaks of one man dying for another, he means his dying in his stead, as his substitute, and can mean nothing else. If he did not intend to say that the death of Christ was literally and strictly vicarious, he has by this illustration employed language which is inappropriate and delusive. When David in his parental agony cried, "O Absalom, my son, would God I had died for thee," he meant, had died in his stead. Substitution has ever been the principle on which God has acted in dealing with our sinful race. Ever since he instituted the sacrificial system, this has been set forth. The Jew who brought his sacrifice to the priest considered it was accepted, not only for him in some general manner, but as his substitute, to die in his place. It was life for life in his estimation. Wherever animal sacrifice has been practised among the Gentiles, the same idea has always prevailed. And neither Jew nor Gentile, in reading such phrases as Christ dying for us, or dying for our offences, could entertain any other idea than that he died in our stead.

We may press this subject further, and ask in what

sense he died in our stead, and can find no other answer that comports with our view of the phrase, than that he died as an atonement for our sins. This is set forth, one should have thought, in language too plain to be mistaken, too positive to be denied, where the apostle says, "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus."

Let us mark this wondrous language which tells us that while the infinite and eternal love of God is the source of redeeming mercy, his justice is that attribute which the death of Christ was intended to demonstrate and to magnify: thrice in the compass of two verses is this declared. As a kind and gracious Father, he loved us; as the righteous moral Governor of the universe, he required that the exercise of his mercy should be in harmony with the authority of his law, and not cast a passing shadow upon the glory of his government. It was for this purpose Christ was set forth as a propitiation, to prove to the universe that while he loves the sinner he abhors the sin, and respects himself. And the cross of Calvary will reflect to the very extremities of the rational creation, the united glories of love and justice. It was on this little spot of our earth, that the stage was erected on which the great God would display his complete moral character to the admiring gaze of the whole rational creation. Nowhere does wisdom appear so profound, justice so awful, or mercy so amiable. Let it not be objected that our planet is too inconsiderable a speck in creation for such

an exhibition to the universe. The manifestation of character is not dependent on the dimensions of its scene. A monarch may perform an act of mercy and condescension in a hovel, which may radiate his glory, and circulate his praise, through his whole dominion. It was in the temple over the altar of burnt offering, that the prophet, rapt in vision, saw the seraphim and heard their lofty anthem, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, the whole earth is full of his glory."

"Herein then is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." The atonement, so far from eclipsing his love, causes it to shine forth with brighter splendour, since it shows God to be so intent upon our salvation, that when his justice seemed to place an obstacle in the way of its accomplishment, which could be removed only by the death of his beloved Son, he gave him up for us all. Every view we can take of this wondrous subject, manifests and magnifies the love of God. Think of the objects of his complacency. He so loved the world. And what world? Not the world of angels; they needed not this exercise of mercy. Not the world of devils; they in irresponsible sovereignty were passed by. But the world of men; this world of ours, on which there is not, nor ever was, one single individual arrived at the age of reason who has not insulted his majesty, resisted his authority, and sinned against him in innumerable ways. Read such descriptions of the world that God loved, as are contained in the first chapter of the epistle to the Romans, and then say, as the magnitude of benevolence is to be measured by the unworthiness of its object, what must be the love of God to man.

Oh for this love let rocks and hills
Their lasting silence break,
And all harmonious human tongues,
Their Saviour's praises speak.

Then dwell upon the fruits of this love of God to man. It is no light or transient benefit it bestows, but salvation, the salvation of the immortal soul: a blessing deep as hell, high as heaven, lasting as eternity; the greatest blessing, in fact, which God can bestow, or man receive. But even this is not the culminating point of Divine beneficence; for that we must look to Calvary, and see the great and terrible God making the person of his Son a painful sacrifice for sin. No wonder the apostle calls this love that passeth knowledge. Had angels become incarnate, and died, one for each redeemed sinner, it would not have been such a display of Divine love as the death of Christ. It is not when looking over this beautiful world, fitted up for man's residence and convenience; nor is it when looking down into the horrible pit from which God has redeemed us; nor when gazing upon the heaven to which he is bringing us; nor when sending our exploring glance through the ages of eternity and surveying the glories of immortality, which are reserved for us; but when standing beneath the cross, when beholding that wondrous spectacle which caused the rocks to rend, the sun to withdraw his light, and the graves to send forth their dead, the crucifixion of the Son of God, that we exclaim, with adoring wonder, gratitude, and delight, "See how he loved us."

IV. Let us now consider how the apostle illustrates this love, by comparing it with the highest expression of human affection. "Scarcely for a righteous man

will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die." By the "righteous man," we are to understand, the just man, who stops in mere justice, and does not add to justice brotherly kindness and charity: the man who does only what he is required out of regard to law and reputation, yea compelled to do, but in whose breast soft compassion dwells not. By "the good man" is meant the truly benevolent man, who in addition to being righteous, is full of compassion, and abounds in mercy and good fruits. The word "goodness" has sometimes in Scripture a generic sense, signifying moral excellence of all kinds, and in other places it has the specific meaning of benevolence; it is in this latter sense it is used in the text. Now, says the apostle, while it is not to be expected that any one will give, or venture, his life for a man coldly just, it is possible that for an eminent philanthropist, some would be willing to give their lives. Human friendship has, in rare instances, gone so far as this, as is proved by the well known history of Damon and Pythias. Damon was condemned to death by Dionysius, the ruler of Sicily. He solicited permission to go to a distant part of the island, to settle his affairs. Pythias, his friend, came forward and offered to be surety for his return, and to die in his place if he did not. The guarantee was accepted. Damon returned when Pythias was about to be led forth to execution. Dionysius was so struck with the affection of these two men, that he pardoned Damon, and took them both into the circle of his friends. This, on the part of Pythias, was love; yes, but it was the love of one friend for another. The love of God was for his enemies. The apostle, by this illustration of one man dying for another, intended to

teach us that benevolence added to justice is an object of public admiration, esteem, and affection. I say, when added to justice: for benevolence when divorced from justice, instead of being an object of esteem, is regarded with suspicion, contempt, and disgust. The man who replenishes the treasury of the Lord with the gains of fraud, who supports religious or charitable institutions by the fruits of dishonesty, gives robbery for a burnt offering, and carries to the altar a sacrifice which is an abomination to the Lord. The common adage is a correct one, "Be just before you are generous;" which Christianity completes by saying, "Be generous after you have been just." The man who excuses the neglect of benevolence by appealing to his honesty, is a sordid niggard; while he who defends his injustice by appealing to his benevolence, is a loathsome hypocrite: it is the union of exemplary benevolence with a regard to righteousness equally exemplary, that constitutes the character to be esteemed, admired, and loved.

But let us look now at the benevolence which is so great that some might be supposed willing to die for the man who exemplifies it. Surely it must be of no ordinary kind. It must be eminent and conspicuous, not oozing in drops, but falling in showers, or flowing in streams; not glimmering like a spark, but blazing like a sun; it must be proportionate to our resources and opportunities: that would be parsimony in one man which would be munificence in another: the gifts of a prince should be as princely as his rank; and the dispensations of a rich man should be as rich as his opulence: it should be multifarious in kind, and not merely a fondness for some pet object, an exclusive regard for some matter of mere taste: it must be prompt, spon-

taneous, and free, not extorted only by the compulsion of importunity; it must drop like honey from the comb, or fall like rain from the clouds, or gush up like the ebullitions of a spring, and not be squeezed from the grudging hand, like water from the sponge, or pumped up by hard labour from the deep well of a reluctant heart: it must be cheerfully dispensed, and not with an unwilling mind and frowning countenance, for "God loveth a cheerful giver:" it must be steady and uniform, not arbitrary, capricious, and eccentric; not blazing like a meteor which soon expires, or appearing rarely, at long and uncertain intervals, as a comet, but moving as the planets in regular and constant orbits, or shining as the sun with daily splendour: it must be the result of principle, and not merely of feeling, an obligation of conscience, and not only an excitement of the passions: it must be judicious and discriminating, not lending itself by foolish and undiscerning indulgence to fraud and importunity, but treating all objects according to their importance; not lavishing much where only little is needed, nor doling out little where much is required: it is self-denying and laborious, and can "endure hardness," and is not an effeminate compassion, exercised only in the chair of ease, or the couch of indulgence, or amidst the soft enjoyments of home: it is clothed with humility, meek in its spirit, gentle in its manner, and in close association with whatsoever things are lovely; and, to crown all, it must find its model in the love of God, be a fruit of his regenerating Spirit, be nourished by the constraining love of Christ, be directed in its exercises to the glory of God, and lead its possessor to say after he has done all, that he is an unprofitable servant, and as dependent upon the merits

of Christ for acceptance with God, as the man who has not a good deed to mention, nor a single act of benevolence on which to look back with pleasure and gratitude.

V. Such is the benevolence of the man for whom peradventure some would even dare to die, and to produce this in us is in part the design of God's love to us. See how the apostle connects these two together "Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another." And then mark how far he carries it. "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." How little has this appalling passage been studied; by how few, and by them how rarely, has it been thought that actual martyrdom for our brethren, as well as for God, is our duty, when their welfare demands it; Christ laid down his life for them, and we are bound to imitate his example and possess his spirit. The prophets, apostles, and martyrs did it: laying down their lives for the cause of the truth, and for the good of the Church and the world. The early Christians did it. Eusebius, the historian, tells us that in a time of the plague they visited one another, and not only hazarded their lives, but actually lost them, in their zeal to preserve the lives of others. If it be true that the character of the deity must form the character of his sincere and ardent worshippers, what ought to be, what must be, what will be, the character of him who sincerely and ardently worships that Being of whom it is said, God is love. The religion of the New Testament seems especially intended, as well as adapted, to form a race, of whom love shall be the predominant character, the identifying badge. It was the leading word on the

Saviour's lips; and every apostle, not only the loving John, but the logical Paul, the practical James, and the zealous Peter, caught up the theme from his Master's lips, and reproduced it in every possible combination in his own writings. It seems to be the very labour of inspiration to produce in the disciples of Jesus this divine and heavenly temper. The apostle Paul tells us we may have the eloquence of men and angels; the miraculous faith that could remove mountains; the alms-deeds that dissipate a fortune; and the zeal of martyrdom; and yet, as regards religion now and heaven hereafter, all will be nothing without love. And why this earnestness, this iteration, this perseverance of inculcation? Because of the difficulty and importance of the duty. It is the hardest lesson, and the highest and brightest glory, of our holy religion.

To produce in us, as I have already said, this disposition, to make us like God, who is love, and like himself, incarnate benevolence, was the design of our Lord's incarnation, sufferings and death. It is a low, narrow, and defective view of the work of redemption, to conceive of it as intended only to deliver us from eternal punishment. The great mischief of the fall was not merely the loss of God's favour and exposure to his wrath, but the loss of his image and of communion with him; and the design of redemption is not only to bring us back to his favour, but to that, without which we could not enjoy even this distinction, his image. It is his purpose of mercy to raise us higher than to the state and condition of pardoned criminals. Our Lord Jesus would not have laid aside his robes of glory; veiled his divinity in human nature; endured the contradiction of sinners against himself;

agonised in Gethsemane; submitted to the insults of Pilate's hall, and died upon the cross, merely to unlock the doors of our prison house, and turn us loose with our depravity unrenewed, and our evil passions uneradicated. Oh no, he came "to redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." He came to invest us with the beauties of holiness and to fill us with the spirit of love, as well as to save us from the bitter pains of eternal death. Without holiness and love a man would be miserable on the highest throne in glory; and he who looks to Christ only to be delivered from the punishment of his sins, without being equally desirous of being delivered from their power, will find that he has mistaken the design of Christ's mission, the nature of salvation, and his own means of eternal safety.

What a view and commendation of our common Christianity does this manifestation of divine love, and its influence upon the heart and conduct of its sincere believers give us, and how completely does it defend it from the flippant objections and shallow cavils of infidelity. What has ever so effectually reformed the morals, softened the manners, and sweetened the intercourse, of the human race? What is it that has ever raised humanity from degradation, and changed tribes of savages and cannibals into humane, gentle, and loving men; transformed the most hideous deformities of our race into its ornaments, and thrown the graces, utilities, and beauties of civilisation over what before was a waste howling wilderness? What has opened its eye, its heart, and its hand, to the children of want and woe; hushed the groans of creation and wiped away the tears of the widow, and stopped the cries of fatherless and

hungry children? "Who explores the hospital, the dungeon, the darksome retreat of unknown, unpitied anguish? The infidel philosopher? Alas, he amuses himself with dreams of universal benevolence while the individual wretch perishes unheeded at his feet. On his proud list of general benefactors you will look in vain for the name of a Howard; and in their system of conduct your search will be equally vain for the traces of his spirit. Christianity claims as her own both the man and his principles. She formed his character, sketched his plans, and inspired his zeal. And might the modesty of goodness be overcome; might the sympathies of the heart assume a visible form; might secret and silent philanthropy be called into view, ten thousand Howards would issue at this moment from her temples, from the habitations of her sons, to the many abodes of sickness and of death. Tell me not of those foul deeds which have been perpetrated in her name. Tell me not that her annals have been filled with the exploits of imposture and fanaticism; that her priests and princes have been ambitious, profligate, and cruel; that they have bared the arm of persecution, and shed innocent blood upon the rack and the scaffold, at the stake and on the field; that they have converted whole nations into hordes of banditti, and led them under the auspices of the cross to pillage and massacre their brethren, who boasted only the "simple virtues" of pagans and infidels. The question is not what actions her name has been abused to sanctify, but what have accorded with her principles and are prompted by her spirit? It is no discovery of yesterday that Satan is transformed into an angel of light; and therefore no great thing if his members also be transformed into

professed ministers of righteousness. Ignorance and dishonesty have often borrowed a christian guise for the more successful practice of knavery and rapine. But when they have violated all the maxims of the christian religion; when they have contemned her remonstrances and stifled her cries, shall they be permitted to plead her authority? Or shall the scoffer insult her with the charge of being his accomplice and adviser? No! In so far as men do not study whatosever things are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report, they evince not the power of faith, but of unbelief; in other words, the spirit of infidelity. If, then, you think to justify your incredulity by showing a man, who to the profession of Christianity adds the commission of crime, the indignant gospel tears the mask from his face, and exposes to your view the features of a brother. Whatever be his profession, we disown his kindred; he acts wickedly, not because he is a Christian, but because he is not a Christian. His crimes conspire with his hypocrisy, to prove him an infidel." This eloquent passage is in harmony with the text; the sermon and the occasion go to prove that he only whose character is made up of that love which worketh no ill to his neighbour, is a true believer in Christianity.

I come now to the occasion which has called forth this discourse, I mean the death of that excellent man and eminent philanthropist, Mr. Sturge. I should feel that I was unworthy of his past friendship, which it was my privilege for nearly thirty years to enjoy, and that I was doing injustice to his great merits and my own sense of his inestimable worth, if I did not thus plant a flower upon his grave, and embalm his memory by this public tribute of affectionate esteem. My long acquain-

tance with him, not only in public but in private, must certainly furnish me both with the means of forming a correct opinion of his real character, and an incentive to hold it up to public notice. Some men who look well at a distance, will not stand the scrutiny of microscopic inspection. He could. And from the opportunity I had of closely watching his character, I do not hesitate to say that beyond most men whom through a long life I have known, his philanthropy answered more nearly to the description I have just given, than that of any other man with whom I have become acquainted. He was the original of the portrait I have sketched. What more need I say? But as a more lengthened delineation of his character will be expected of me, I will attempt to give an outline of its more salient and beautiful points.

I leave the details of his family history to others. I have to do with himself. Even in youth he was distinguished for thoughtfulness, seriousness, and kindness, not unmixed however with innocent cheerfulness. In all these respects, the boy was father of the man. At what period of early life his mind was brought by divine grace under the influence of religion, I know not; but that it was so brought is known to all who knew him. He was a truly devout and holy man, upon sound evangelical principles: one who was convinced of sin, and who looked by faith to the cross of Christ for salvation through the atoning blood of Christ. His piety was not the vague spiritualism of some of the more early "Friends;" but was enlightened by the positive doctrinal teaching of the New Testament, as set forth in the writings of that eminent and saintly man

Joseph John Gurney. His religion was the broad deep basis of the whole superstructure of his exemplary morality and diffusive philanthropy. It was not more beautifully than truly said of him in one of the public journals, that "while at the call of duty he never shrank from any degree of publicity which the occasion fairly required, his private life was passed in the tranquil atmosphere of piety, out of which he came single-minded and lion-hearted to do his allotted work. He brought into public life the sentiments and habits of a recluse. He nourished his soul in those fair pastures which lie far above the common haunts of men, at the base of the everlasting hills. Quiet and contemplative as an ascetic, he was ardent and chivalrous as a crusader. A profound sense of religious obligation made him calm, strong, and fearless." This is true: I have been with him more than once at his morning family devotions, which, whoever were his guests, and whatever was their rank and character, even when Lord Brougham and others at the time of the meeting for promoting Social Science were present, he never omitted through fear, shame, compliment, or business.

Mr Sturge was a man of uncorrupted, incorruptible integrity. His sincere piety dictated in his case, as it will in every other where it is genuine, the most elevated morality. His conscience was tender as the apple of his eye, not only in great things, but in little ones. In this commercial country, and in this age of keen competition, trade is, to a considerable extent, the test of moral principle. It is a fiery ordeal, but he passed through it with honour. Whoever repudiates the apostolic rule of following "whatsoever things are honest, pure, true,

just, lovely, and of good report," and smiles at the simplicity of the man who would impose this law on the freedom of commercial transactions, he did not. It was his law, from which the wealth of the Indies would not have tempted him to swerve. He carried his religion into his counting-house and into the market: and thus made his "light to shine before men." I never heard of a single instance in which, by a business transaction, he compromised his religious character, or his reputation as an honourable tradesman. Christian men in trade, I say all this not only in commendation of him, but for your imitation. Enthrone truth, justice, and honour in your place of business, and be willing, rather than offend these presiding spirits of the place, to forego any gain, and even to suffer any loss. I believe our deceased friend would have sacrificed all he possessed on earth rather than knowingly and intentionally have forfeited his integrity.

Here I must mention a fact as much to the honour of his brothers as it was to himself. When his mind, or rather his heart, developed more fully its bent in the cause and operations of benevolence, they consented to release him as much as possible from the cares and anxieties of trade, allowing him still his share of its profits, that he might follow the noble and mighty impulses of his ardent soul, and be no loser by his philanthropy. They generously said to him, "Pursue your course as a benefactor, and leave us to ply the labouring oar of business." I know one more such case, where two religious tradesmen have a brother gifted and impelled to do good, to whom they act in like manner. These are fine specimens of humanity, and we love to contemplate them to check the progress

of misanthropy which other views of human nature are apt to produce, and to hold them up, not only for admiration but for imitation.

Our dear friend in whatever he undertook under the guidance of his judgment and at the dictate of his conscience, was a striking instance of decision of character. Many men have convictions, inclinations, and impulses for good, but they have not the determined will or the dauntless courage to carry them out. They are benefactors in desire, but not in action. Opposition disheartens them, suspicion paralyses them, ridicule frightens them. They will do good when they can float unobstructed upon the stream of general support and approbation, but they cannot struggle against the current. This was not the case with Mr Sturge. When his mind was once made up, on a point of duty, he was resolved to go forward, though all the world laughed or frowned in a chorus. If others would go with him, well. If not, he would go alone. In all matters of duty he had the courage of a hero, and the constancy of a martyr. These are the men that bless the world, the men of determination that can breast the wave of opposition, and encounter the storms of ignorance or reproach.

But it is as a philanthropist of distinguished activity and benevolence that Mr Sturge stands out so prominently before the world, and I fearlessly assert that his benevolence answered in every particular to the description I have given in an earlier part of this discourse.

It was eminently conspicuous. It was no ordinary philanthropy. It entitles him to a place on the roll which bears the name of Howard, Wilberforce, Clarkson, and Mrs Fry. He belonged to the brotherhood

of rare and distinguished benefactors of his kind. His beneficence was as multifarious in its objects as it was intense in its degree. No object of human misery was too obscure to catch his attention, too remote to be thought beyond his reach, too insignificant for his kindness, or too great for his generous ambition. His eager and exploring eye seemed ever abroad searching for new outlets for the compassion of his full heart. His liberality was proportioned to his resources. In earlier life, when his means were limited, and he was comparatively poor, his philanthropy waited not for the high tide of his future prosperity, but gave much out of his little. Even then he was known sometimes to deny himself a dinner that he might have something, which only this act of self-denial could enable him to bestow upon the necessitous. As his means increased, his wealth, instead of closing his heart, his hand, and his purse, as is sometimes the case, threw them more widely open. Some men have lost their liberality in walking from a cottage to a mansion. His increased at every step, till at last it was profuse. God smiled upon his industry and gave him wealth, the chief value of which to him, was neither to hoard, nor to spend in splendid show and abounding luxury. His mode of living was such as became a Christian gentleman, neither mean nor magnificent. His house and grounds were neatly elegant, in which not an article could be seen of which it could be said with propriety, "Might not this have been sold for so much and given to the poor?" O how much is spent by even professing Christians in useless superfluities, or needless extravagance. A tithe of the luxuries of the age would, so far as means go, hush the groans of creation, dry up the tears of humanity, and regenerate

the world. Our friend was "given to hospitality," and his house was constantly the resort of those who were out on errands of mercy. In his grounds he erected a large room, capable of containing two hundred persons, not for parties of pleasure, or the amusements of fashion, but as a convenient place of convocation for the sons and daughters of mercy to meet, and concert and execute their schemes of benevolence.

Constantly witnessing and sorrowfully lamenting the evils of intemperance, Mr. Sturge practised total abstinence, and patronised the Temperance Society. His zeal in this cause was ardent and operative. His time, his property, and his influence, were all in measure given to it. The last time I was associated with him in labours of love, was on occasion of Mr Gough's visit to this town, when he presided on one evening in the Town Hall, and I the next. Why, O why will not our ministers of religion, our magistrates, our influential members of society, and our Christian professors, come forward and combine their energies and their example to emancipate our country from the most dreadful and desolating curse that ever afflicted humanity? If they like not the constitution and operations of the existing institutions, let them tax their ingenuity and employ their benevolence for something else. An evil that is the cause of three-fourths of the crime, and two-thirds of the pauperism, and one-half the insanity of this country, surely, surely requires, in every point of view, financial, moral, and national, some great and combined effort to repress it.

Perhaps I might say that the supreme object of Mr. Sturge's benevolence was the abolition of Negro Slavery. In this cause he was a co-worker with Brougham,

Wilberforce, Clarkson and Buxton, and side by side, fought with them the battle of freedom for the African race, yea, in one respect he did that which neither of these men did. In the year 1836 he made at his own cost a voyage to the West Indies, that by personal observation and not only by report, he might know the evils of slavery. Neither the deprivation of home comforts, nor the perils of the ocean, nor the still greater dangers of an insalubrious climate, nor the frowns of interested men, could deter him from this undertaking. The information he collected was laid before Parliament and had great influence in exchanging the apprenticeship system for emancipation. Nor was this all he did for this object and in this way, for in the year 1841, encouraged by what had taken place in regard to emancipation, he undertook still at his own expense and in his own name, a voyage to the United States of America, as he says in the preface of an interesting volume he published on his return, "To promote the universal abolition of slavery, and also the maintenance of permanent international peace." Here he travelled thousands of miles, both in the free and slave states, visited slave plantations, jails, and hospitals, conversed with all classes of persons; with the President; with senators and members of Congress; with slave-holders and abolitionists; and with the poor captive groaning in his fetters, and in every conceivable way endeavoured to stir up the Americans to the enormous evil they were nourishing in the bosom of their country. Would God his efforts had been more successful!

But if the abolition of Negro slavery was the imperial object of his generous ambition, there were others

almost equal to it; especially the prevention of the evils of war, the unlawfulness of which, both offensive and defensive, is one of the principles of the body to which he belonged. His anxiety to diffuse the principle and practice of international peace was intense, and his labours to promote this object were incessant. "He was one of the first, if not the first, in England to further those principles of non-intervention, on which much inconsiderate ridicule has been expended, but which the great body of our countrymen are now silently adopting. He attended and took a prominent share in the Peace Congress, at Brussels in 1848, at Paris in 1849, at Frankfort in 1850, at London in 1851, and elsewhere in subsequent years, and to the last days of his life his interest in the great cause he had undertaken was predominant in his mind. During the war between Denmark and the Duchies in 1848, he went first to the head quarters of the Schleswig Holsteiners, and then to the capital of Denmark, to endeavour to persuade the belligerents to refer their disputes to arbitration in accordance with the spirit of Christianity, and with the provisions of the constitution to which they had promised allegiance." But his efforts for preventing the horrors of war did not stop here. When the horizon of Europe in 1854 exhibited awful portents of a gathering storm, which soon after raged with such dreadful violence, he, with two other gentlemen, took a journey to St. Petersburgh, solicited and obtained an interview with the emperor, to induce him, if possible, to avert the impending conflict. Although their mission was not successful, yet a deep impression was produced on the mind of the emperor; and how could it be otherwise when he saw before him three simple-minded men, so

earnestly engaged on such an errand of mercy? Quixotic, at the time, it appeared no doubt to many, and there was not wanting the contemptuous sneer of men whose selfish, calculating, and unfeeling minds have no susceptibility for the impressions of the sublime and beautiful in the moral world.

Connected with this war in the north might be mentioned another instance of Mr. Sturge's self-denying and laborious benevolence. By one of the mischances which are incident to a state of hostilities between nation and nation, much property belonging to the inhabitants of Finland, contrary as it seems to the usages of war, was destroyed by the British fleet. Loud complaints were raised and circulated derogatory to the honour of England by this outrage. The weight of the catastrophe fell upon the poorer classes. The woes of the sufferers roused Mr. Sturge's pity, as the unwarranted violence which inflicted them did his sense of justice, and he undertook, with a friend, a journey to Finland, to inquire into the facts upon the spot, to ascertain if it would be possible to relieve the poorest class of the sufferers, and with the hope, under the divine blessing, of promoting "good will among men," and preparing the way for the restoration of the cordiality and attachment which the inhabitants of Finland had long cherished towards Great Britain. Having travelled from place to place in that country, and conversed with many of the sufferers as well as others, Mr. Sturge in the name of his business firm subscribed £500 towards their relief. Having performed this noble act, he and his companion went on to St. Petersburgh, and there addressed a simply eloquent and respectful letter to the emperor Nicholas, pleading for

the liberation of the serfs, and the re-establishment of the British and Foreign Bible Society, which was set up by Alexander I, but subsequently suspended. A modest and beautiful account of this effort was printed for private circulation.

But while Mr. Sturge's benevolence stretched across oceans and distant continents, it was not unmindful of objects nearer home. It in no sense partook of that romantic virtue which can be adventurous for foreign and extraordinary objects, but is indifferent to such as are common and only of local importance. He was a warm friend and advocate of popular education conducted on the voluntary principle. The "Friends" have a Sunday morning school for the moral improvement of young men, at Severn Street, when they breakfast togegether before the school exercises, afterwards dispersing to attend their respective places of worship. An admirable plan this of doing good, in addition to our Sunday schools. On these occasions Mr. Sturge, when at home, was generally present, and often furnished their meal at his own expense, read to them the word of God, and gave them counsel and encouragement. As a proof of their respect and gratitude, a large number of the young men of their own accord walked in procession at his funeral. Deeply concerned for the youths that have been brought up before the magistrates for crimes, and convinced that prison discipline usually has but little beneficial influence upon their moral character, and often a contrary effect, he and his brother instituted a Reformatory Institution in the neighbourhood of this town, and supported it themselves. Nor was he inattentive to the health and recreation of the working classes; for their benefit, and especially to divert them

from the public house, he appropriated a field of eight acres near his own residence for their amusement, and doubtless often regaled his benevolence by witnessing their athletic sports and innocent enjoyments. In addition to this, he opened another field adjoining the premises of a ladies' school, for the use of its juvenile inmates. Is it not a beautiful instance and manifestation of that charity "which is kind," to see one whose benevolence could expand to the relief of eight hundred thousand slaves, and great national objects, and at the same time contract to seek the healthful recreation of a few young ladies? But where shall I end? From what case of real human want or woe that was ever presented to him, did he ever turn away with a sordid excuse, or an angry refusal?

His benevolence, I may remark, was the philanthropy of principle, as well as of feeling; the dictate of his judgment and conscience, as well as the impulse of his heart. He felt it at once his duty and his privilege to do good: a sense of duty gave sanctity to the privilege, and a feeling of privilege imparted pleasure to the duty. Nor was there anything capricious, whimsical, or eccentric in his beneficence. It was not shewn merely when a matter struck him or interested his imagination. There were no softer seasons of his soul, at which only he could be approached with hope of relief. He was not one of those fitful benefactors, of whom it is said, you never know what to expect from them, profusion or parsimony; much or nothing; surly words or kind deeds. Nor was his beneficence that unsuspicious, credulous, and blind charity which suffers itself to be deceived by specious falsehood, and which is in fact a bonus upon imposture and an invitation to cheats. His

well-known philanthropy exposed him incessantly to appeals from all quarters, till they became almost interrupting and annoying. But he bore all with patience and scrutinised every appeal with care, and was as conscientious in refusing to help a bad case as in assisting a good one. In this he acted with a due regard to the well-being of the community: for an undiscriminating benefactor, whose charity is blind or imbecile, is himself almost a pest to society, by multiplying other pests. And then Mr Sturge's manner of doing good was as unostentatious as his benevolence was diffuse, yet cautious. It distilled as the dew, softly and silently. There was no profession of philanthropy, no Pharisaic sounding of a trumpet, no thirst of applause, no courting of attention. He went about doing good, clothed with humility and with the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, and would have been as willing to do good under an incognito, had it been possible or proper, as without a concealment. And yet there was a quiet power in his manner, which gave him influence over the mind of others, who fell under the fascination of his gentle earnestness.

Such was the philanthropy of this extraordinary man. But perhaps it will be said all this was his social character, what was he in that sphere where every man is best known, at home? Sometimes an advocate of national liberty has been a tyrant at home, and has so exhausted his benevolence and kindliness on strangers, as to have none left for the inmates of his own house. Mr. Sturge could stand this test also. If his light shone brightly before men, it shone if possible still brighter before his household. To them he proved one of the tenderest of husbands, the fondest of fathers,

the kindest of brothers, and the most considerate of masters; and it was his felicity to be blessed with the companionship of a noble-minded woman, of whom it is her highest praise that she was in every respect worthy to be the wife of such a man. She never attempted to impose a restraint upon his liberality, but seconded him in all his endeavours to bless his fellow creatures; and the same remark has already been made concerning his brothers. His home was the soft green on which his soul, sometimes weary in the work of his benevolence, reposed for refreshment and to prepare for future labours of love.

With his political opinions I have here nothing to do. It is well known they were widely liberal, and many who admired him as a philanthropist, censured him as a politician: and much as I admired and loved him, I could not always go all lengths with him in this matter. At the same time, I am quite sure that in this he was as conscientious as he was in all other matters, and that his politics were a part of his religion.

I do not pretend he was a faultless character: if I were to assert that he was, I should seem to see his shade frowning upon me, and hear his voice rebuking me; for no man was more sensible of his shortcomings than himself. I have it from one who knew him best, that he was deeply and frequently affected by a sense of his demerit. Piety is like the flame, the higher it rises, the more it trembles. One of his last utterances when in his mortal agony, as far as they could be interpreted, indicated this; he closed his life as he had spent it, in the spirit of the publican in the parable; and when his foot was upon the threshhold of heaven, and

his eye upon its opening door, he sent up a cry for mercy, and entered eternity clothed with humility, and dependent upon divine grace, and not upon his own works, for everlasting life.

And now what is the first idea which, in the review of such a life, presents itself to our mind? Is it not surprise at the amount of good which one man, who has the heart and the means for deeds of beneficence, can accomplish? What mind, but that of God, can estimate the sum total of his philanthropy? Oh, is it not for a lamentation and woe to think what a mass of wealth, of energy, and of influence is, so far as its application to the well-being of man or the glory of God is concerned, lying waste. How important is it for us all to study our individual obligation. How few ever present the prayer of Saul of Tarsus, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" In this age, organisation is carried to such an extent as to discourage and almost to crush out the still nobler ambition of individual effort for the good of mankind. In the sight of so many societies, all doing a good work, men are apt to feel that as individuals they are ciphers, and are ignorant of the power that each possesses to bless the world. It is a glorious spectacle to see an individual man fired with zeal, melted with compassion, and guided by intelligence, starting off alone in a carcer of mercy, selecting his own objects, sketching his own plans, looking to God only for guidance and patronage, and directing all to his glory. Too many wait for associated energy, and think they can do good only in connection with others: while, again, many measure their benevolence by the standard of their neighbours. So did not our departed friend. He never asked what others

would do, but considered only what he could do, and ought to do. It were well if we all recollected that we shall be judged alone, and that the measure of our responsibility is the measure of our means and our opportunities. And let us not be discouraged and refuse to do our utmost, because we cannot do all he did. Ten talents are not granted to each steward. To some are given only five, and to some only one. God will not require ten where he has given only five or one, nor will he be satisfied with only the improvement of one or five, where he has granted ten. It "is accepted according to what a man has, and not according to what he has not."

In reviewing the character that has thus come before us, we should regard it not merely as the work of man, but as the production of God. He was "His workmanship, created anew in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God had before ordained he should walk in them." And we should echo his own words which, could he speak to us from the unseen world, he would surely utter, "Not unto me, not unto me, but unto God give glory." It is said by the apostle Paul that his brethren "glorified God in him." Let us do the same with reference to him who has been removed from us. We should look at him as we do at an admirable portrait or statue, not only to admire the exquisite workmanship, but to praise the skill of the artist. God made him what he was, and impressed something of his own likeness upon him; and if in reference to the material world it becomes us to "ascend through nature up to nature's God," it is still more our duty, as regards the spiritual world, to rise from the work of grace in the human soul, to him by whom it is wrought.

Shall we not bless God for the existence and the excellence of our friend, and that we have had so bright an instance of christian philanthropy? Shall we not congratulate our town upon the honour of having had him as one of its inhabitants? Let our admiration, however, not be barren praise, but lead to imitation. What a loss has the cause of humanity sustained by his decease! What a spring of benevolence, of which multitudes drank and were refreshed, is thus dried up! Let us all feel called upon to contribute something by our increased activity in the cause of religion and mercy, to repair the breach, that the world may not be entirely the loser. "Be ye not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises," is the voice which comes to us from his vacant place among the living. As an inducement to do good, consider the pleasure, I may say the luxury, of philanthropy. Mr. Sturge was one of the happiest of men, because one of the most useful. The smile which usually rested on his countenance was the outshining of the light of joy which glowed in his heart. To what a privation of pure and sublime delight does that man condemn himself, who lives only for himself. As benevolence is its own reward, selfishness is its own curse. How contracted is the circle of his pleasure, who revolves only on the axis of self: but how wide the sphere in which the philanthropist moves, for by sympathy he partakes the happiness of the universe, and as to the extent of his ability he increases it, his own joy increases too. Every benefactor proves by his own experience the truth of our Lord's words, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." And then what honour is connected with true philanthropy. We saw this in

the respect which was paid to our friend while he lived. Men that turned away from the political side of his character, gazed with respect, and even reverence, on its philanthropic side. His funeral gave solemn emphasis to this testimony. The Corporation, had their offer been accepted, would have awarded to him a public funeral, and though the accustomed retiringness of his denomination declined this mark of respect, it could not repress the spontaneous expressions of general esteem. The lengthened cortege, the closed shops, the crowded streets, the long procession of respectable men, the concourse of ministers and members of religion of all denominations, the seriousness or sorrow that sat on every countenance, which, in mournful silence, seemed to say, "All have lost a benefactor;" the numerous sermons which from the pulpits of so many congregations paid a tribute of respect to his memory, all proclaimed the respect in which he was held, and which was, in fact, a public honour put not only upon the philanthropist, but upon philanthropy itself. It is selfishness in disguise which leads men to do good for the sake of the honour which it brings with it, and from this no man was ever more free than Mr. Sturge. Yet public honours usually attend philanthropy in its progress; or if, as in the case of our divine Lord, clouds follow it in its course, those very clouds in the end resplendently reflect and increase its glory. Who respects, who ought to respect, the man that has no heart to pity the woes, no hand to relieve the wants, of his fellow creatures? Such a man is despised, and ought to be despised, whatever be his wealth, his rank, or his attainments. And let no one content himself with mere posthumous benefactions. The charity of a will,

though it is occasionally exercised with this intent, is no atonement for the want of the charity of a life; though it sometimes supplies its deficiency. The legacies of the dead, when devised to good objects, and not taken from those who possess the claims of near relationship, and not bequeathed in purchase of a passport to heaven, are good things, but the donations, activities, and self-denial of the living are far better.

What now remains but that I briefly allude to the suddenness of Mr Sturge's removal, and employ it as a motive to induce us all to be ever ready for the summons to eternity, whenever, or however unexpectedly, it should be served upon us. The hour which commenced with his being the active, loving, and happy husband and father, closed upon his corpse. The messenger of death left him scarcely leisure to bid adieu to those he loved most on earth, or to pray for an entrance into heaven. But he needed not then to prepare for death. He was prepared. His lamp was trimmed, his loins were girt about, and he was as one waiting for the Master. To him sudden death was sudden glory. Before he knew he was approaching the gate of death, he had passed through the portals of immortality, and his spirit was far advanced on her heavenly flight, almost before those who stood round were aware it had left its clay tabernacle.* A real Christian, living consistently as

* Mr Sturge had been for some time afflicted with a disease of the heart, and must have often anticipated the sudden termination of life. This did not depress him, though it gave additional seriousness to his habitual frame of mind. On the morning of his decease he rose as well as usual about half-past six, and being partly dressed went to the chamber of his eldest son, at whose bedside it was often his custom to pray, to call him for their usual morning ride. On returning to his chamber a fit of coughing came on. He said to Mrs Sturge,

such, is always and everywhere prepared for death, as much so in the counting-house, as in the closet of devotion; in the street as in the house of God. Preparation for death does not consist of a few hasty prayers uttered by us, or for us, while engaged in the mortal agony, nor in the reception of the sacrament from priestly hands. Preparation for death means preparation for heaven. None will or can rise from earth to heaven, who are not in some measure made heavenly upon earth. Preparation for death then means, justification by faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, regeneration by the Holy Spirit, and holiness of heart and life: for it is said, "without holiness no man shall see the Lord." Without these prerequisites, no morality however exemplary, no charity however diffusive, no amiability however attractive, will gain us admission to the world of glory. An error on this subject, is, as I have often said, a mistake that will require an eternity to understand, and an eternity to deplore. And how necessary is it to be ever thus prepared. Our death may be as sudden as the one we now lament. There may be no time so much as for a single prayer. As one of the speakers at the funeral said, "It is a solemn thing to live," since the whole life must be accounted for at the bar of God in the day of judgment, and leads to endless weal or woe. It is a still more solemn thing to die, for death puts the seal of an eternal destiny upon

"I am very ill," and sat down on the floor. His brothers were instantly sent for; on whom as well as on his wife he fixed looks of ineffable affection, yet expressive of great bodily suffering. But there was no opportunity for exchange of words or thought. A few broken sentences were all he uttered, and these, as far as they could be interpreted, were ejaculations of prayer. Thus suddenly and quickly did his redeemed spirit pass away, as if in haste to be in heaven.

every individual. Prepare, then, to meet your God. This has often been the theme of the preacher through a long and somewhat laborious ministry, it still is, and will be so through what remains of life. Age and accumulated and still accumulating infirmities furnish premonitions not to be mistaken or unheeded, that my ministry is drawing to a close. I have come amongst you this morning in weakness and with trembling, and wish to be heard as one who is speaking to you from the border country of eternity. O look not at things which are seen, which are temporal, but at the things which are not seen, which are eternal. Weigh, I beseech you, the dread importance of that awful and incomprehensible word eternity, and prepare to meet your God. The fashion of this world passeth away. The gorgeous pageant is rolling on, and to morrow with all its transient yet fascinating scenes may have vanished for ever from your sight, and you may find yourself amidst the tremendous realities of the unseen state. Whither, ah! whither are you going? Whither?

ADDRESS

AT THE

FUNERAL OF THE REV. R. S. McALL, LL.D.,

OF MANCHESTER.

DELIVERED AUGUST, 1838.

The Author had long felt for Dr. McAll all the admiration expressed in the following discourse, deeming that of all the preachers and public speakers of his day he had the finest imaginative and speculative intellect.

Those who judge of Dr. McAll only from reading his printed sermons, cannot form any adequate notion of the assimilating power which, in his happier moods, he exercised over the minds and hearts of those who were privileged to form his audience. As he dilated on his immortal themes, each hearer became conscious of grander ideas, nobler sentiments, and higher purposes; and, for every one capable of the reflection, the remembrance of having been so far elevated above his ordinary self remained an abiding joy and glory.

This highly gifted man was much influenced by the Author's practical counsels, and was always glad to soothe his own too sensitive spirit by communing with the genial and loving nature of his friend. And the Author, on his part, considered the Doctor's friendship as one of his own greatest distinctions and felicities.

With what language shall I break the silence of this mournful scene, and give utterance to the sentiments of sympathy, instruction, and consolation which are expected from me by this bereaved and afflicted church, assembled, as by the mysterious providence of God they now are, around the expectant sepulchre of their late inestimable pastor? Where are the tears fit to be wept on such an occasion, and what tokens of commiseration and concern are adequate to an event which has united them, and myriads more, in one general fellowship of poignant grief?

If to eulogise the dead, instead of comforting and admonishing those that survive, were the object of this service, few, if any one, could be found sufficiently adventurous to pronounce a panegyric on the vast and varied powers of that extraordinary man, whom God, for reasons which we are permitted neither to comprehend nor conjecture, has removed from our world, in the zenith of his days, and the midst of his labours and his usefulness. On no previous service of my whole life did I enter with a greater weight of oppressive sorrow, with a deeper sense of my own weakness, and a more humbling, yet a not uninstructive conviction of my own incompetency. We are all weak to-day, and perhaps feel our weakness, in some respects, more impressively and more painfully, than even when it was our privilege

to gather round the pulpit of our now departed friend, and listen to the wondrous strains that flowed from his lips.

While musing on this lamented decease, I heard a voice; "The voice said, Cry. What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of grass; the grass withereth, and the flower thereof fadeth, but the word of our God shall stand for ever." To-day is this scripture fulfilled before our eyes. There lies the flower, than which a lovelier rarely threw its beauty, or shed its fragrance, on the church of God, cut down, withered, faded; or, thanks for the superior light of the Christian revelation, we may say it is transplanted to the paradise of God, to flourish and exhale its rich perfume in the regions of immortality, never to close, and never to wither there. But here is the undying word, the undiminished truth of God, planted amidst this fearful wreck of mortality, and set, as the source of spiritual life, over against these desolating ravages of death. Not a doctrine of eternal truth is lost; not a promise of Scripture has fallen with the departed preacher; nor is a particle of revelation about to be enclosed in the tomb with his precious remains. The satellite that received so largely, and reflected so brilliantly, the light of the Sun of Righteousness, has set upon our hemisphere; but the great central luminary retains his place, his effulgence, and his power. If ever Christianity appears with greater advantage in one scene than in another, it is when it erects its trophies on the tomb, inspiring immortal hopes in the breast of the dying, and softening the pang of separation to the survivor, by visions of celestial glory, in which those that depart and those that remain shall soon be reunited,

around the fountain of eternal life, and in the raptures of perfect bliss. Such are our circumstances this day, when our sorrows, instead of being aggravated by the sullen silence or the gloomy presages of infidelity, are assuaged, and the perturbations of our hearts tranquillized, by the achievements of him who overcame the sharpness of death, and opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers.

Death is, in every case, an event of most momentous consequences, and is without any parallel but itself in the history of the universe; it terminates the moral probation for eternity of an immortal spirit, and commences either her endless progression in knowledge, holiness, and bliss, or her interminable career in vice, misery, and despair; and when it first occurred, must have been followed by a groan that resounded, and a pang that thrilled, through immensity. But the death of a minister of the gospel, in addition to the consequences which affect his own destiny, involves others which extend to his flock. If he has been faithful unto death, his decease is in mercy to himself, but it must at the same time be in judgment to his church. The testimony of a witness for God to an unbelieving generation is finished, a herald of salvation is withdrawn, an ambassador of Christ is recalled, a light of the world, which had guided many, and might have guided more, into the haven of eternal peace, is extinguished. It is not the death of a friend merely, however valued, or a relative, however dear, whose affection soothed the sorrows of time, and softened the rugged path of life; but it is the removal of one whose solicitude watched for the soul, promoted its salvation, and diffused, or aimed to diffuse, a beneficial influence over its eternal exis-

tence. What arithmetic can estimate the greatness of such a calamity? Instead of that living voice which, both by the eloquence of preaching and the still holier and more elevating eloquence of prayer, often lifted the rapt hearers to heaven, and meetened them for its glories, they have nothing now but the cold and silent marble, which perpetuates, with his honoured name, their own incalculable loss. The deprivation, however, is not in all cases equally great; for all ministers are not equally eminent or equally beloved. Others, again, though eminent and beloved, yet worn out by time or labour, are but the wreck of what they were, the monuments of their former selves; and though still venerated as majestic ruins, cannot be regarded, amidst the accumulating infirmities of age, of as much importance to the church as their younger fellow-labourers in the cause of Christ: but there lies one, whose transcendent powers of intellect; whose multifarious acquirements in general and sacred literature; whose entire devotedness to the work of the Christian ministry; whose captivating eloquence; whose attachment to his calling and his flock; and whose holy reputation, were such as to raise him above the reach of competition; while his benignity of heart, united with his noble mind, made it impossible to envy him, or to regard him with any other sentiments than those of affectionate admiration. Such an one, cut off in the meridian of his strength; and his noon-tide glory suddenly quenched! Alas, my brother! Oh, the depth of this mystery of Providence: how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! Well may his church mourn; for all the churches of our denomination throughout the land, and the churches

of other denominations, mourn with them. We feel that a servant of Christ has been taken away, who was the common property, even as he was the powerful advocate, of our holy religion. If the most consummate medical skill; if all the known virtues of medicine; if the most tender and unremitting assiduities of friendship, protracted to the last struggle of the mortal strife; and if, in addition to this, all the power of devout prayer, ascending from innumerable hearts and many religious communities, could have availed to detain him upon earth, our beloved brother had not died. We thank you, medical attendants; we thank you, christian friends; we thank you, praying ministers and churches, for all your efforts to save this precious life: but it was otherwise ordained. Eternal God! as we bend over this sepulchre, give us grace enough to say, and it requires no ordinary grace to say it, "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight."

His death, although appointed by the deep and inscrutable wisdom of God, seemed to be almost the necessary result of obvious and ever operating causes. The amazing power of his intellect, associated as it was with a too exquisite sensitiveness, and a susceptibility too delicate and refined for this rude world, caused the flame of life to burn with such intense ardour, as to consume the socket in which it glowed. His corporeal frame was too weak to sustain the pressure and the friction of his mental faculties; and then the labours to which those faculties stimulated him, as a minister of the word of life, prematurely exhausted and destroyed him. Even in his ordinary services, there was an expenditure of sensorial power ever going on, which few constitutions could endure; while, on more public and

solemn occasions, the coruscations of his stupendous intellect were so dazzling, as not only rapidly to consume his own strength, but to impair, by the attention they required, and the excitement they produced, the strength of those that heard them. Oh, that he had exerted himself less, in order that he might have exerted himself longer! Oh that, instead of revelling and luxuriating as we did in those mighty productions of his astonishing mind, and unintentionally, but certainly, stimulating him in his exertions, by the gratification which it seemed as impossible not to express, as it was not to feel, we had more wisely and more urgently entreated him to spare himself, and reminded him, that the great object of preaching the gospel did not require, and could not be more effectually secured by, such exhausting and protracted sermons. His own mind was too much absorbed by his subject to be regardful of himself, and he seemed to ascend the pulpit in the spirit of martyrdom, as to an altar, saying, as he went up, "Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy and rejoice with you all." His fondest admirers must admit, that he erred in the length, and sometimes in the depth, of his discourses. It will perhaps be said, that it is easy for ordinary minds thus to judge: it is, however, true. But, after all, who could bound the eagle in his flight, with such an eye and such a pinion as his, with the mid heaven to float in, and the glorious orb of day as the object of his ambitious soarings? Who could restrain leviathan in his course, with the fathomless abyss of ocean for his plungings, and the consciousness of power to explore its darkest and its lowest depths?

One thing is especially delightful to reflect upon; the

great talents of our departed brother were not employed on vague generalities, metaphysical subtleties, or the mere poetry of religion; the fundamental doctrines of evangelical truth were his theme, the cross of Christ was his station, and the salvation of immortal souls his object. There was an elaboration about many of his sermons above what is usual, or perhaps what is necessary, for pulpit exercises; and it would be claiming for him too near an approach to moral perfection to assert, there was no taint of literary ambition at any time in his breast; but it may be firmly believed, that the predominant feeling of his heart was, to do as much justice to the high argument of his discourse as his powers would allow. He recollected that he was discussing eternal truth, in the presence of Jehovah, and for the salvation of souls, and he taxed his faculties to the uttermost for the work. We are told that the classic pagans of antiquity, in preparing the statues and temples of their deities, were so tremblingly alive to the sacred nature of their occupation, that they bestowed as much art and labour on those parts which were invisible to the eye of the spectator as on others that were exposed to the public gaze, deeming it profane to offer anything but what was perfect to the immortal gods. What was superstition in them, was piety in him; and such was his sense of the sanctity of his work, that it is probable, if he had found occasion to prepare a discourse to be delivered in the hearing of God alone, he would have lavished upon it the stores of his affluent and mighty mind, as anxiously as if it had been to be delivered in the hearing of a company of his ministerial brethren.

In this manner, and with these subjects, he con-

tinued to exert himself to the end of his course. His last appearance in the pulpit was to exalt his Lord. He fell at his Master's feet, with his arms clasping the cross; and having uttered, with a shout, "He is mighty to save," finished his public testimony, and expired.* It will never be regretted, by any who know the pre-eminence of love among the Christian graces, that his last sermon was preached to the members of another communion, to whom his own flock will not grudge his closing effort, since it served to demonstrate how catholic was his disposition, gave him the opportunity to bear his dying testimony against religious bigotry, and enabled him to quit the pulpit for ever in the seraphic form and spirit of Christian charity.

Domestic affliction had also its influence in bringing his life to a premature close. His daily ministrations, and nightly vigils, for that dear object of his affections who preceded him so shortly to the tomb, united with all the agitations of parental hope and fear, protracted through several anxious months, added to the infirmities of a frame, already presenting to the eye of skilful observers symptoms of decay. How affecting is it that she who had been introduced by his efforts, conjoined with those of his excellent wife, into the world of grace, should precede him only three weeks on the road to heaven, as if to be the first of the spirits of the just made perfect, to receive him to the realms of immortality, to conduct him to the throne of God, and to point out to him the wonders of the world of glory.

It is, then, no painful dream, no distressing illusion, but a sad reality, that Dr. McAll is gone. Yes! There

* His last sermon was for the Methodist Missionary Society in Manchester, in April last, when his text was, "Mighty to save."

lies before us, waiting the last sad offices of Christian love, all that could die of the husband, the father, the Christian, the pastor. Receive our sympathy, devoted woman, on laying down the name of wife to take up that of widow: may the widow's God be yours. Receive our sympathy, dear youth, whom we love for your honoured father's sake, as well as your own: your father's God will be your's, and his friends, your friends. Receive our sympathy, aged and surviving sire of our friend; comfort your sorrows on the loss of your son, with a grateful recollection of the distinction of having given such a child to the church. Receive our sympathy, surviving brothers, on being deprived of so much fraternal worth; and may you, as ministers of the gospel which he preached, wipe away your tears with the found mantle of his piety and devotedness. And ye members of the church over which he presided with so much dignity, in all the meekness of wisdom, accept our condolence, and that of all your sister churches, who mourn with you over the loss you have sustained, and which they have sustained in common with you. Not only lament his departure, but seek to derive spiritual benefit from it. You have lost his life, lose not his death also. Let the remembrance of his life and labours, of his sermons and example, be concentrated in one mighty influence and impulse upon your hearts, at his grave, leading to a new, and solemn, and entire consecration of yourselves to the service of your God. Here confide in Him afresh, amidst the deep mysteries of his Providence; approach the thick darkness in which he has shrouded himself, and say to him in faith,

"W through the cloud believe thy grace,
Secure of thy compassion still."

The chief Shepherd still lives, though the mortal pastor is removed. Not a pillar of his throne is shaken; not a nerve of his arm is withered; not a ray of his glory is extinguished. He lives in all the plentitude of his power and grace. All that constitutes the light, and comfort, and safety of the church, is still in untouched and inexhaustible fulness in him; and over this scene of death and lamentation he sends forth the sublime assurance, "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of the unseen world and of death." Honour him by your confidence. He deserves it; and will reward it. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.

May it not be feared, and ought it not at this solemn season to be suggested, that many of the congregation of our deceased friend permitted him to wear out his life in their service, without any other result to themselves than a profound, but profitless admiration? They gazed with delighted astonishment, but only as on a kind of splendid fire-work that was to please them, instead of a light which was kindled to guide them to everlasting life. They were satisfied to praise the messenger, instead of believing the message which he bore to them from a merciful God intent upon their salvation; and thus fell into the snare, incident to those who hear the gospel preached by ministers distinguished for their talents, of having the imagination gratified and the intellect regaled, to the neglect of the more awful functions of the conscience, and the renovation of the heart. Have not some of you basked in the sunshine of his genius, and enjoyed the beauties of his eloquence, forgetting all the while that his aim was, and that yours ought to have been, the salvation of your immortal

souls? Are you not still impenitent and unbelieving? He found you in your sins, and dead in trespasses and sins he has left you. He has gone to give in his account; and of you, oh! what an account! To have heard such a man in vain! To have listened to such sermons without being persuaded to repent, believe, and live! Yours is no common responsibility. Look on that coffin. There lies what was the preacher, what is the corpse. The tongue that captivated, though it did not convert you by its magic strains, is silent, and cleaves to the roof of its mouth: the eye that beamed upon you sentiments and emotions which even that tongue was too feeble to utter, is closed in the darkness of death: the heart which palpitated with anxious hope for your eternal welfare, "has ceased to flutter and beat, and never shall flutter again." It is all over, except his death, and that still remains. Being dead, he yet speaks. His grave now opened before you, his mortal remains now lying before you, are awfully, impressively vocal. Never among all his sermons was one so solemn as that which he is now delivering. Hearken to those sepulchral accents, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might, for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge in the grave, whither thou goest." Oh, that the dead preacher may do that which the living one never did, awaken you to a deep and effectual concern for the salvation of your immortal soul! Oh, that the mute eloquence of his coffin may accomplish that which the vocal eloquence of his pulpit addresses never did, persuade you to begin, from this hour, a religious life!

May it not be permitted to us to hope that while these obsequies are celebrated upon earth, by the deep

sorrows of a bereaved church, they will be observed in heaven, by the joys of angels over some sinners brought to repentance by this impressive scene. It was the barbarous custom of some of the ancient nations to celebrate the obsequies of their heroes by the slaughter of some of their captives or enemies, in order to satiate the yet unappeased vengeance of the departed warrior, whose shade was to be calmed to his repose by such bloody oblations. If it could be imagined that the spirit of our departed brother had not yet gained its rest, it would not be the slaughter of either friends or foes that would restore him to tranquillity, but the salvation of their immortal souls; and although it is impossible to imagine that he has not gained a seat in heavenly glory, or that he is restless upon it, yet it is every way probable that his bliss would be increased, even there, by the salvation of some sinners, converted from the error of their ways through the instrumentality of his funeral rites. Whose shall be the conversion which shall grace his obsequies, give to him a usefulness in death, and add to the felicities of his heavenly state?

My beloved and honoured brethren in the christian ministry, the death of our friend speaks to us in accents more affecting and impressive than any of those from his living voice, which, in times that are past, have caused our hearts to thrill with deep and varied emotion. Some of us will ever consider it as an honour to have been numbered among his personal and intimate friends. Scenes and seasons of delightful intercourse with him during his life and labours, will ever be accounted as some of the most precious deposits of our memory; but especially shall we cherish the remem-

brance of those solemnly affecting and edifying interviews we had with him when we saw him on the verge of life. His foot was on the threshold of the unseen world, and he had turned away from the view of things seen and temporal, to look at things that were unseen and eternal. How strikingly did his appearance and his state of mind illustrate the beautiful words of the poet,

"A mortal paleness on my cheek,
But glory in my soul."

What a combination of the weakness of nature and the strength of divine grace was there! What fearlessness of death, what weanedness from life, what boundings after immortality, what prospects of glory were displayed in his dying experience, and what humility! The intellectual giant was transformed into the little child of piety.

With what emphasis does his departure say to us, "Work while it is called to-day; the night cometh, when no man can work." He was cut off in the midst of his days, and removed from his labour when it had been long in contemplation to widen its sphere. How solemnly does it warn us, to consider every other object but that of the glory of God in the salvation of immortal souls, as infinitely beneath the notice of a minister of Jesus Christ. So it appeared to him in those awful moments; standing, as he then did, in full view of eternity, and within range of the excellent glory, the rays of which were falling upon him, how little, and insignificant, and worthless, did every pursuit of human ambition appear to him! If popularity and admiration had ever charms for him, they had faded then; and he felt more real delight in listening, by anticipation, to

the song of praise which ascended from one soul, though the soul of a pauper child, whom he had been the instrument of raising to glory, than he ever did to all the applauses which had followed him through his illustrious career. As we gather round his grave, let us consecrate ourselves afresh to the service of our Divine Master, let us abjure every object and purpose of life, but that of glorifying God in the salvation of man. May we find the mantle, not, indeed, of his vast intellect, that we cannot hope to gain, but the mantle of his fervent piety and deep humility, with which he clothed himself afresh in the dark valley of the shadow of death, as the fittest and most becoming dress for his immortal spirit, in his approaching interview with his adorable Lord. The church and the world sustain an amazing loss by his decease; a mighty chasm has been made in the instrumentality of the age, which no one of us alone can fill up; but which, by renewed exertions, many combined perhaps can repair. May we all go from his tomb, humbled to think how little we have done for Him who hath called us into the ministry; and summing up afresh the aim, the purpose, and the prayer of our hearts, as regards what remains of our abode on earth, in the language of the apostle, "For me to live is Christ."

Let us all, with this open sepulchre before us, meditate on our own end. We are mortal, let us prepare to die. We are immortal, let us prepare to live for ever. Our fellow-men are dying around us, and we are dying with them. If the multitude die as unnoticed by the public, as is the fall of the autumnal leaf in the pathless forest, not so the lamented individual whose grave we now surround: he has sunk with the crash of some

majestic tree, the noise of whose fall resounds through the wood, and compels attention from every quarter. Death is now, for a short time, the common topic of conversation throughout this large and busy town; it obtrudes itself on every mind, diffuses a seriousness over every countenance, and makes the latter end of man, for a moment, contemplated even from the haunts of trade. A voice floats over us all, in tones loud, deep, solemn, "Prepare to meet your God." "Be ye also ready, for at such an hour as ye think not, the Son of Man cometh." May every heart respond in the prayer of inspiration, "So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom."

And now,

"Unveil thy bosom, faithful tomb!
Take this new treasure to thy trust;
And give these sacred relics room
Awhile, to slumber in the dust.

"Nor pain, nor grief, nor anxious fear
Invades thy bounds; no mortal woes
Can reach the forms that slumber here;
And angels watch their soft repose.

"So Jesus slept; God's dying Son
Passed through the grave, and blessed the bed.
Rest here, dear saint, till from his throne
The morning break, and pierce the shade.

"Break from his throne, illustrious morn!
Attend, O earth, his sovereign word;
Restore thy trust, a glorious form,
He must ascend, to meet his Lord."

ADDRESS

DELIVERED AT THE INTERMENT OF THE

REV. J. JERARD, OF COVENTRY,

ON THE 28TH JULY, 1850.

Mr. Jerard was not known much beyond the limits of his city, but the Author always entertained very high respect for him, on account of his natural powers of mind and his attainments in theology. But what was chiefly remarkable in him was the peculiar blamelessness of his life, the compensating result of a gentleness and diffidence which prevented him from obtaining a greater reputation. He was one of the Missionaries captured in the mission ship, Duff.

It is appointed to men once to die.

Thus stands the decree of heaven, a decree universal, final, irresistible, and irrevocable. When death receives his commission, from One higher and greater than himself, he proceeds to execute it without discrimination or discretion; disregarding alike the cries of helpless infancy, the agonies of wounded affection, and the intreaties of the sincerest friendship.

In ordinary cases, man drops into the grave with as little notice as the fall of the autumnal leaf in the forest. It is only now and then, the fall of some venerable oak produces a crash that fills the gloomy domain with its echoes, and awakens attention from every observer. It is an awful thing under every circumstance to die! Death is not merely a cessation of the vital functions, not merely a severance of the closest ties, not merely the dispossession of an inhabitant of our world of all he held on earth; the extinction of his thoughts, his purposes, and his plans: but it is a summons of the Eternal, for the immortal soul, from a state of probation, to a state of retribution; the departure of a spirit from this world, to enter upon an interminable career of happiness or of woe. It is an event which has no parallel in the revolutions of time, and the consequences of which will require no less than an endless duration in which to develope themselves.

Such an event has happened, in the death of the venerable Pastor of the Church assembling in this place; who goes down to the grave rich in years, in experience, and in knowledge. Funeral rites afford opportunities, and the present instance would supply abundant material, for the language of eulogium. But how much better may one be employed in admonishing the living than in praising the dead. Could those lips, now for ever sealed in the silence of death, open again but for one brief moment, how forcibly would they admonish the present speaker, to say little of his departed friend, but endeavour to make the occasion advantageous to those who yet survived him. Still I should do injustice to my own feelings were I not to say something of him whom we have lost, and whom we all deplore: of his gifted intellect, his holy life, his blameless conduct, his amiable disposition, his gentle spirit, and his patience in afflictions. How exemplary was he in his behaviour, as a husband, a father, a master, in domestic life. How sound in doctrine, as a Christian divine. How chaste, earnest, and faithful, in his sermons as a preacher. How tender in his sympathy, vigilance, and kindness as a pastor. Uniting all that was most pacific with all that was noble, and veiling all with the most profound humility. Nearly half a century I have known him, and he always appeared to me to be one of the loveliest specimens of humanity, and of the sanctifying grace of God; one to whom might be applied the Apostle's language, "But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children: so being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the Gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were

dear unto us; ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily, and justly, and unblameably, we behaved ourselves among you that believe. As ye know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged everyone of you, as a father doth his children."

I shall leave to my young brother, the surviving Pastor, to give a more extended and enlarged delineation of that beautiful character, which God has lately withdrawn from our world, and more particularly from you, since to him, as the preacher of the funeral discourse, this mournful, yet pleasing duty appertains.

I first of all address a few words of sympathy to his surviving children. You are orphans, but to you belongs the orphan's text, "When my father and mother forsake me, the Lord will take me up." Be thankful you had such a father: that he was spared to you so long, to be the guide of your youth, and, under God, the instrument of forming your character. You have lost him, but not wholly, for his memory will still remain with you, and be ever precious. It is your happiness to have descended from a father over whose name and memory, though you may drop the tear of affection, you will never call up the blush of shame. May you follow him, even as he followed Christ: then after a few more months or years, you will join him and your sainted and glorified mother, in that world where there is no death nor sorrow. I next tender my sympathy to the other relatives who are present at these obsequies. It is your happiness to wipe away the tears the occasion calls for, with the support and assurance, inestimably precious in your case, that you sorrow not as those without hope.

To the Church who enjoyed the ministry of our

departed friend, I would say, "Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the Word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation, Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." The senior pastor has now been removed from you: he stands in that relation to you no longer, but the consequences resulting from such a relationship, though it be now past, will follow you through life down to death, and enter with you even into the eternal world, as a savour of life unto life, or of death unto death. You have heard his last sermon, you have had his last prayer; therefore be it your prayerful solicitude, that when you meet him, as you must do at the bar of God, you may stand prepared to give an account of all the discourses which from this place have dropped from his lips, for your instruction and salvation. It is but justice to you, thus publicly to say, that you so loved and respected him as a man of God, a preacher of Christ, and your pastor, as to have nothing at this solemn hour to charge yourselves with as regards a deficiency in your obligations to him. He lies not there the victim of unkindness, the martyr of inconstancy. There is no venom in your recollections, and there will be no sting in the thoughts, which you still continue to cherish concerning him. But may I ask, if, while you have loved the minister, you have received the message he delivered? May it be permitted me on this occasion to inquire under what circumstances on your part the tie has been severed? Has he left you all following him to glory? Was it his felicity on his dying bed, to cherish a hope that every one of you will be his crown of rejoicing in the day of Jesus Christ? Oh, should there be one present, that has reason to fear

that his pastor is gone away to be a swift witness against him at the day of judgment; let me intreat that individual, on whom so many sermons have been lavished in vain, for whom so many prayers have yet been presented without any blessing, on this solemn occasion, at the grave of departed worth, and before these mortal remains, to consecrate himself to God. Let the death of the pastor in his case, through God's effectual blessing, accomplish that which unhappily his life never did! Oh! to have those lips sealed up in death that have been accustomed to point out to you the way of salvation! To consider that you shall see that face which you have beheld so many years in this pulpit no more, how solemn and affecting!

I would offer the Church my congratulations, amidst these expressions of sympathy, that although the elder pastor has been removed, the younger still remains; that they are not now to be plunged into all the solicitude of looking round for another shepherd to watch the flock, and to all the perils which such a situation must of necessity expose them. I do indeed rejoice that there remains one still to occupy this pulpit, not unworthy to be the successor of him whose remains we are about to follow to the grave. My young brother, I feel for you under the circumstances in which you are placed, in having devolved upon you all the solicitude and all the labour of the pastorate, which were once shared with you, by that dear friend with whom you lived and worked in such harmony and affection. I know the tremblings of your heart in prospect of such increased responsibility. Be cheered; be comforted; He that sustained your venerable colleague through so long a period will never, never forsake you. Look to him.

May the prayer which has been so appropriately and affectionately presented on your behalf, be heard and answered, and a double portion of the spirit of Elijah rest on Elisha; may his mantle be worn as gracefully, and as long, by you, as it was by him.

Ministers of the sanctuary! my beloved and honoured brethren, what a voice is this for us; for those of us especially who are growing grey in the ministry of the word; our shadows are lengthening, our sun is rapidly declining. Oh! how impressively, with what powerful, though silent, eloquence does that coffin speak to us, and say, "Work while it is called day, for the night cometh when no man can work." May we live as he did, that no cloud of suspicion may hang about our name while we live, nor dim the lustre of our setting sun: that no finger of scorn hereafter may point to our monument, and contradict the expressions which the hand of affection may have been pleased to write there.

What remains for me now but to address myself to this vast and deeply affected assembly, whose mournful seriousness is not merely that mixture of curiosity and awe with which the public gaze on the obsequies of a departed public man. But the testimony borne by the inhabitants of this city to one of the oldest and most peaceable of its citizens, a man whose gentle spirit rendered it all but impossible he should have any enemies. The subject of this solemnity is death. It is death itself that speaks to you to-day. It is not a book; it is not a sermon; death itself is the subject, and death himself the preacher. Death, from whose touch all sentient beings recoil with instinctive dread and horror. In this case, it was death stript of its terrors; it was death met with a smile: would it be so met by you?

Have you any reason to suppose you could thus meet it, thus approach the grave? Have you any right to say you could enter upon the interview with the last enemy with the same composure with which it was held by our departed friend? He was ready, are you? Oh! that this solemnity, by God's blessing, may be the means of awakening inquiry and solicitude in the minds of all present. Again, and again, I press the question. Are you prepared to die? Do you understand what preparation for death is? It is not a few prayers uttered, or the sacramental rites participated in, when the body is half dead, and the mind half delirious. O dreadful delusion, never to be dissipated till the realities of the unseen world shall awaken the soul from its desperate mistake: an error here, persisted in till death itself closes the scene, is a mistake which it will require an eternity to understand, an eternity to deplore. Next year, next month, or next week, for aught you can tell, your soul may be required of you. Let me ask, with all the solemnity of the occasion, are you ready for death, judgment, and eternity? What is then preparation for death? Preparation for heaven. No man is ready to go out of this world till he is prepared to enter into heaven. And what is heaven? A holy state for a holy people, and none can obtain admittance there but the followers of the Lamb. "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." "He that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be condemned." "Without holiness no man can see the Lord." The new birth, justification of the soul by faith in Christ, and a holy life, alone can prepare the soul for an entrance into heaven. Wherefore, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to

do, do it with thy might: for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave whither thou goest." On the brittle thread of human life, in many cases already half broken through, are suspended all the opportunities that ever will be granted to you for the salvation of your immortal souls. Turn, then, from this scene, and let each go and present the prayer of the Psalmist, "So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom."

THE RECTITUDE AND FIDELITY OF THE DIVINE ADMINISTRATION.

A PASTORAL ADDRESS,

INCLUDING A

DISCOURSE PREACHED IN CARRS LANE CHAPEL,

DECEMBER 5TH, 1847,

ON OCCASION OF THE

DEATH OF MRS. T. S. JAMES.

The Editor's wife was Sarah, daughter of Mr. Thomas Pensent, of Kingsleighton, Devon. She died when she had been married little more than three months, and after a few hours' illness. At her death the greatest feeling was shown by the friends of both the families bereaved, and her relatives have never ceased to mourn her loss. The Author's life was lastingly saddened by it. In a preface to the Address, he says:

I am aware I speak as a father, and after death has magnified and almost canonised the lost object: but I speak no more than all who are more impartial, perhaps, than I am, will confirm, when I say that few brides ever more rapidly or more extensively conciliated affection, than did my dear daughter-in-law, during the short time she sojourned amongst us.

To myself, he late bereavement is one of peculiar grief; in addition to the happiness which the union had bestowed upon my son, it brought no small share of enjoyment to myself. With no inmate of my dwelling, except servants, but an invalid daughter, who had welcomed in the dear departed an affectionate sister; I had pleased myself with the hope that we had both found one, who from the nearness of her relationship, the amiableness of her disposition, and the contiguity of her dwelling, would be a frequent visitor to us, and relieve the somewhat desolate aspect of our own abode. Like a vision she lighted upon us, and like a vision she has fled; and thus was extinguished, before we had time to prepare ourselves for the event, that new light which we thought God had kindled, to shed its mild ray upon our dwelling. It has been otherwise determined by Him who never errs; and ten short weeks were all that was allowed us to enjoy this new mercy. Nothing now remains for us, but to pray for submission, and by Divine grace assisting us, to practise it: and seeing we have lost her life, to see to it that we do not also lose her death.

My beloved Flock,

I HAVE determined to reverse the usual order of such communications as the present, and instead of addressing to you some counsels, and anticipations, which bear upon the coming year, to submit for your solemn and devout perusal some reflections upon the events of the year which is now coming to a close. There is little hope of amendment for the future, if there be no pensive and inquisitive looking back upon the past: and probably there is usually a better moral influence arising from retrospection, than from anticipation. The close of the year, by an almost involuntary exercise of mind, leads on the thoughts to the close of life: and if ever we feel inclined to present the prayer, "Lord, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it is; that I may know how frail I am;" it is when the sun is setting upon us for the last time of another year.

At such a season we must be unusually thoughtless, and be given to a spirit of levity unworthy of a rational and immortal creature, not to meditate upon the brevity of life and the shortness of time. One should think it were impossible, if we did not see the fact verified by observation, that a thinking being, who owned the existence of a God, and professed to believe in the bible, could come to the end of a year, and not look back upon the year's mercies with gratitude, upon its

sins with humiliation, upon its sorrows with improvement, and upon its rapidity with solemnity. It is gone for ever, however it has been spent; and in a few hours more can never be of the smallest further use to us, except in the way of reflection. "It is like a seed-time gone, and the tract of ground sunk under the sea. It is as a treasure-house burnt, but of which, nevertheless, we may find some little of the gold melted into a different form in the ashes. Let us then, in parting with the year, try to gain from it the last and only thing it can give us, some profit, by means of our thoughts reaching back to what is gone. Each serious mind will have its own reflections."

Some have to look back upon an almost uninterrupted succession of mercies. Their course of travel in their earthly journey has been almost entirely through pleasant scenes, and under bright skies. Both personally and relatively they have known nothing but comfort; they have walked in a tearless path; and have arrived at the end of another stage of their pilgrimage, not only in possession of all the comforts with which they set out upon it, but with a considerable accession to them. They have been surprised upon the road with the messenger of glad tidings, and the arrival of new blessings. Can you, to whom this applies, help bursting out into the grateful language of the Psalmist, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits, who forgiveth all thine iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thy life with loving-kindness and tender mercies." Do, do consider what a legion of evils has been all around you; how heavily they have fallen upon others, and might, but have not, fallen upon you; no,

not even a few drops shaken off from the skirts of the storm that has burst in fury upon them. Are you fit to enter upon another year, without gratitude, or to receive future mercies, without a right feeling for past ones? What, shall the sun of enjoyment rise upon your heart as upon a rock, and the shower of God's goodness descend upon your barren spirit as upon the sand? "I beseech you, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.'

Ah! but there are others of you, to whom it has been, so far as present appearances and experience go, a dark year, in the calendar of your history. It was a mercy you could not look forward and anticipate what was to happen; for how could you have lived day after day in the prospect of what has come upon you. How bright was the scene, and how great was your delight in contemplating it, as the year opened upon you. Your plans were laid, and they were all lawful ones; your expectations, and they seemed well founded, ran high: your anticipations, and they were quite natural, and amply justified by what then was visible, were all bright: not a presage hung out its friendly warning from the skies, not a single sound gave note of warning from the earth. Suddenly, however, the heavens gathered blackness, and before you could take in a single sail, the tempest in all its fury burst upon you; and the little bark which carried all your earthly happiness, was a wreck: and this year commences the era of your grief. You, at any rate, have obtained no practical refutation of the wise man's verdict upon earthly joys, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." To you the retrospect is full of sorrow, and that which to the sons of mirth is a

season of enjoyment, will be a time of weeping for your sad hearts.

For you, mourners in Zion, and you know your pastor, and still more so his son, is among the number, I now write. We are not the only weepers in the congregation; the only ones to whom the close of the year will bring painful contrasts and bitter recollections: there are others of your number in the fellowship of the church, who are of our number in the communion of sorrow: especially one of your deacons, bereft by the Providence of God of the mother of his seventeen children, and left to bear alone that heavy burden of domestic care.

And besides those who are looking back upon the agony of death-bed scenes, how many others are there to whom this year has been disastrous, either as to the frustration of their schemes, the loss of their property, or the extinction in various ways of their earthly hopes. Within the comprehension of our large congregation, how many are there to whom the language of consolation will be a word in season. To you then I address myself in this pastoral letter. How well, as far as experience goes, I am prepared for such a labour of love, I need not tell you. My history in by-gone years is not strange to you. What in mercy I have had, and what in mystery I have lost, you know. No doubt all has been in wisdom and faithful love. Blessed with a ministerial career of unexpected success and of undeserved comfort, the favourable gales might have been too powerful for my sails, but for the ballast supplied by these personal and relative afflictions. My recent trial, which took away one of the brightest hopes of my declining years, I need not describe. The sun of my connubial

day had long set, when this dear object rose like an evening star upon my darkened horizon: and while I gazed upon it with too fond a delight and too eager a hope, this also has gone down before my eyes, and left me again in darkness and sorrow. Amidst all, however, I desire to be still, and know that he who hath done it, is God; and that even this also he hath done in wisdom and in love. I would now adopt the language of the apostle, and say, "Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth in Christ. And whether we be afflicted it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effectual to the enduring the same sufferings which we ourselves suffer: or whether we be comforted it is for your consolation and salvation."

I need not inform you that on the first Sabbath-day after the interment of my dear daughter-in-law, I endeavoured by a suitable discourse to comfort and instruct her bereaved husband, and other relations, many of whom were present, as well as to soothe my own mind. The printing, in some form or other, of that discourse has been solicited. It is in this way, rather than in a more public one, I have determined to comply with the request. I shall retain the very words which were employed on that occasion, only making small additions, here and there, to amplify more fully some thoughts which were then barely suggested.

THE SERMON.

It was a mournful and impressive scene that was beheld in this place of worship lately, when three widowers, two of them brothers, and the other the son of the elder of these two, descended into the capacious vault at the foot of this pulpit, to look round upon the coffins of their wives, who had been there gathered to the congregation of the dead, the fellowship of the tomb, and who, as yet, have that dreary mansion exclusively to themselves. The first who occupied it, was the fond mother of five small children; the second was the counsellor, comforter, and in some respects the coadjutor of a pastor burdened with the cares and anxieties of a large church; and the third, one who had not ceased to be a bride when she became a corpse, one who in the short space of only ten weeks dwelling among us, had won more hearts, and conciliated more affection, both within and without the family circle in which she moved, than any other individual whom I ever knew: and whose richest eulogium it is, that on account of her peculiar loveliness of character, she deserved all the regard and respect which it was her felicity to receive.

And now amidst the ravages of mortality, the wreck of human schemes of pure felicity, and the deep mysteries of Providence, which that vault contains, what shall we say?

Psalm cxix, 75.

I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right, and that in faithfulness thou hast afflicted me.

With such words have I endeavoured to controul the griefs, to instruct the minds, and to comfort the

hearts of all who have mingled their tears over the last of the three deaths to which I have alluded; and especially of that lonely sufferer who has been destined to see the cypress over-shadow and wither the bridal wreath; and to have the cup of connubial happiness dashed from his lips, while inhaling the first draught of its crystal waters. With these words, I have endeavoured also to compose my own mind; and with them I shall now endeavour to edify yours.

By God's "judgments," we are in some places to understand his holy laws, and his ordinances respecting the worship to be offered him, which are so called because they are the determinations and appointments of his infinite wisdom, and rightful authority. In many other places, and in the text among them, the expression signifies the afflictive dispensations of his Providence. These are so named for a double reason; partly, because they are acts and manifestations of God's holy justice against sin, in the way of punishing his enemies or correcting his children; and partly, because he judiciously measures, directs, and mitigates them, as the state of his children requires, and their strength will bear. Hence the language of the prophet, "Correct me, but in judgment."

The principal word of the text being thus explained, I go on to consider,

I. The truths which this passage contains.

And does it not most clearly and emphatically declare, that in all the afflictive events of life, we are to recognise, not only a directing and an over-ruling Providence in general, but also the application of its provisions and dispensations to individuals?

The former of these is declared in the expression,

"Thy judgments, O Lord;" and the latter, in the supplemental clause; "in faithfulness thou hast afflicted me." Yes, where infidelity sees nothing but the confusion and misrule of chance, and beholds the miserable children of men driven about in their sorrows, the sport of accident, and of blind contingencies, faith beholds a wise and perfect plan, comprehending all worlds and all ages, including alike the destinies of nations, and the falling of a sparrow; the telling of the number of the stars, and the counting of the hairs of the saints: a wise and perfect plan, daily filling up, by the best adapted means, and by the employment of the most appropriate instruments. In that plan are included disease and death, the loss of property and friends, the frustration of human schemes, and the disappointment of earthly hopes. There is Providence everywhere, chance nowhere. There is Providence in the house of mourning, as well as in the house of feasting, in the funeral procession, as well as in the nuptial party. The gloom which over-spreads us at this moment, is but the shadow cast from that cloud which is round about the seat of him, "Who hath prepared his throne in the heavens, and whose kingdom ruleth over all."

And then while the grandeur of Providence is apparent in those arrangements which affect the movements of worlds, its comfort lies in its care and provision for our own individual selves. Tell me not of general laws. I admit their existence, and believe in their operations and application; but it is their special reference to my individual case, that sustains my sinking spirit in the hour of my extremity. The Scripture does not recognise, nor can I, the distinction between a general and a particular Providence. It is all one scheme. It

is not what God is, and what he does for others merely; but what he is, and what he does to me, that wipes the tears from my eye, and hushes the sorrow of my heart. It is my being able to call him my God, and the disposer of my lot, that is the balm for my wounded spirit. The thought may contain a mixture of self-love, but it is natural that it should be so. There are disappointments so severe, and anguish so bitter, that the sufferer may say, "It meets not my case, to tell me that Providence comprehends the destinies of an empire, and the history of a planet; I can gain no peace till I am told that I, little, insignificant individual though I be, am as truly regarded by God's mind, will, purpose, and care, as if I stood alone in existence, the solitary object of his paternal love and rectoral arrangement." And this, blessed be his holy name, is the view given of his Providence in every page of Holy Writ, where the subject is referred to.

But a second truth contained in this passage is, that all God's providential dispensations, not excepting the most painful ones, are in accordance with perfect rectitude.

He is righteous not only when he bestows a favour, but when he resumes it; as righteous when he extinguishes the light of our dwellings, as when he kindles them: and this which is now matter of faith, to be believed simply on the testimony of God, will hereafter be matter of knowledge. God's most painful bereavements, and the other afflictions which he sends upon his people, are all right, viewed in relation to his sovereignty. He is the universal creator, upholder, and governor of all his creatures, and must of necessity be the universal disposer of them. He cannot abandon

his rights, nor surrender his prerogative; who could wish him to do so in a solitary instance? To resign his disposal of a single creature, would be so far, to abdicate his throne and to abandon the government of the universe. He cannot make a creature independent of himself, nor put anything beyond his own controul: for this would be like an engineer's leaving something in a complicated and perfect piece of machinery unconnected with the moving power, or with the other parts; which would be to impede and mar all.

It is all right viewed in connexion with the principles of justice. Can the most afflicted individual in all this assembly arraign the justice of God at his bar and impeach his equity, because Omnipotence has broken up his schemes of earthly happiness? No. Every one must say, "Righteous art thou in thy judgments, O Lord." It is not merely in the bright sunshine of his Providence, when all his gifts and favours in rich profusion stand thick around us, but in the deepest, darkest gloom of our adversity, when the fragments of our broken cisterns are before us, and the water is spilt upon the ground, that we must say, "He hath not dealt with us after our iniquities, nor rewarded us according to our transgressions." Is it for a man who has been justly condemned to die, and yet has been pardoned and restored to nearly all his former possessions, to fret and murmur if still some one benefit be withheld, or taken from him? Is it for him who has just left the condemned cell, from which he was soon to be led forth to execution, to be discontented and peevish because some precious article of his house has been taken from him? The remembrance of his condemnation, and its justice too, with the consciousness of his pardon, might be

supposed sufficient to reconcile him to almost any privation. Is not this our case? What, complain of the paternal scourge, when the judicial sentence of condemnation is removed! "Is it for a living man to complain, a man for the punishment of his sins?" Rather let us say with the prophet, "I will bear the indignation of the Lord, for I have sinned against him." Let us dwell more upon our sins, and we shall think far less of our sorrows. Contrition is the best help to submission.

It is all right, viewed in relation to Divine wisdom. Jehovah is wise in heart, his understanding is infinite. His eternal mind is an omniscient one. He cannot err. It is an absolute impossibility. Omniscience can no more make a mistake, than Omnipotence can be at a fault, or Omnipresence can be excluded from any spot. It must be right, if God has done it. Omniscience not only expands to comprehend the universe generally and at large, but contracts and concentrates its attention upon every particular event. As God's nature is wholly in every place; so God's wisdom is wholly in every event. God is in everything, and wisdom is in all God does. He is often mysterious, never unwise. His Providence, like vast lakes, is dark because of its depth.

> "Too deep to sound with mortal lines,
> Too dark to view with feeble sense."

Mystery has been one of the characteristics of the Divine administration from its very commencement. The inspired writers of every age have alluded to it, and the saints of every age have observed it. This arises in fact out of the infinitude of God's nature, and the immensity of his plans. It is well for us to know this:

for if it were only of late and in reference to ourselves it had assumed this character, if it were a new thing to see the Almighty wrap himself in clouds and retire into the innermost recesses of his pavilion of darkness, how would such a novelty of procedure distress and terrify us. How many, and what painful surmises would it awaken, to find that on us of this generation alone, the dark shadows had fallen; and how apt should we be to conjecture that the mystic characters which we could not interpret, were portents that marked us out beyond all others, as the butt of God's arrows. Even as it is, how prone are the children of God, from the weight and peculiarity of their trials, to draw conclusions unfavourable to their own adoption and God's paternal love. To what an intensity of solicitude would this be raised, but for the history of other ages, and the experience of other generations, by all of whom it has been acknowledged that God's "Path is in the sea, and his footsteps on the deep waters." It can therefore excite no suspicion, and awaken no alarm, and should not drive us to ask in surprise and agitation the question, "Whence, and for what purpose, this deep mystery?" when we see him acting in a way that so entirely reverses all our schemes, contradicts our dictations, confounds our puny intellects, and fills us with amazement. Standing, therefore, as I do at this moment over that vault which entombs the brightest earthly hopes of the evening of my life, and the still brighter hopes of a far heavier sufferer, I repeat the declaration of the text, "I know, O Lord, thy judgments are right," and let every heart respond, Amen!

A third truth contained in the language of the text is, that the dispensations of Providence in application to

those whom God designs to bless, are the operations of faithful love.

As "right" imports justice, faithfulness proclaims benevolence. The psalmist asserts first God's perfect rule of procedure, and then his merciful intention; the one silenced all his complaints, the other called forth his confidence, and even gratitude. God's faithfulness is the attribute which is put forth most prominently on the page of Scripture, for the consolation of his afflicted people. Sovereignty and Justice are very proper subjects to be presented to the afflicted, but their end and purpose are to prevent murmuring and rebellion, to awe the soul into submission, rather than to heal its wounds by distilling into them the balm of consolation. The heart bruised and broken by affliction; the spirit wounded and crushed by sorrow, needs something more soft and tender; something that shall dissipate its fears, excite its hopes, and relieve its despondency, by making it feel that it is the object of Divine sympathy and of infinite mercy. It cannot in its feeble state digest such strong meat as mere justice and sovereignty; it must be fed with the milk of love, and revived with the cordials of kindness. And here then is the consolation contained in the latter part of the verse, "in faithfulness thou hast afflicted me," that is in the fidelity of love. By justice God takes care of his own interests; by faithfulness, of ours. What music is there to the whole universe, but especially to our sinful world, and most of all to the dwellers in the vale of tears, the inhabitants in the land of Bochim, in that description of Deity, God is Love! That one note gives rapture to the seraphim's song, and at the same time, by a mightier operation still, plucks out the sting of

sorrow, and calls forth a feeling of joy and praise, where nothing else had been heard but sighs and groans. But this, even this, finishes not the divine revelation of God to the sufferer; the climax is this, to hear him saying, "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten." Amazing tenderness! "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." It is almost worth being afflicted to feel the applicability of these words to our case, and to realise expressions of future love in our own trials. There is enough, one should suppose, in that language to dry up all the tears of God's weeping family, and almost to drive sorrow out of his church. It is this which gives to affliction a grace, and reconciles man to his lot. What cannot we take and bear from love; even from an earthly love? "Faithful are the wounds of a friend." "Let the righteous smite me, and it shall be a kindness; it shall be as excellent oil, which will not break my head." What then shall we not, can we not, bear from a love which is divine, infinite, infallible, omnipotent?

But still it may be asked what is meant by God's faithfulness in our afflictions, in other words, how is his faithfulness manifested thereby? Just thus; God is love in his own nature. He has merciful intentions towards us, he is not willing that we should perish, but that we should come to repentance. He is intent upon our salvation in another world, and to make us happy for eternity. He has given us his well-beloved Son to die for our sins upon the cross; and has sent us the gospel of his grace, and invited us to partake of his salvation; but instead of entering into his grand and merciful designs; instead of repenting, and believing, and leading a holy and heavenly life; instead of living for salvation

and eternal glory, we are taken up with the present world, our possessions, and our relations: our business and our pleasures engross our affections, and absorb our hearts. He sees us in danger of losing that salvation, which in the exuberance of his mercy he has provided for us. It is then that, more intent upon our eternal salvation than upon our present enjoyment, all his love is put in motion to save us from being destroyed by the very mercies he has conferred upon us. To do this he removes, by a severity of love, the very objects, which by displacing him from our affections, endanger our salvation. He throws the deep shades of night over the prospect of earth, that we may be attracted to the light of heaven. He breaks the cistern, that we may repair to the fountain. Here then is his faithfulness, it is the fidelity of a mother who removes from the hand of the child she loves the article which would injure him, though it will cost him many tears to part from it. It is the fidelity of a father who corrects a son, rather than let him be ruined by his misconduct. It is the fidelity of a man who would rouse his neighbour from luxurious repose and pleasant dreams, rather than permit him to sleep on and be consumed to ashes by a fire which has broken out in his dwelling. It is the fidelity of a surgeon who severs the flesh and amputates the limb of his patient, to save his life. But neither any one, nor all of these instances together, can be even a shadow of that faithfulness in God, which afflicts his people for their benefit. He not only is faithful in afflicting them, but he could not be faithful without it.

This it is, his faithfulness in chastising us, which makes him to be love. If he leave me to ruin myself by my comforts, rather than take them away for my

salvation, what love is there in this? How could I revere him, how could I confide in him, if the injudiciousness and blindness of a creature love could find their way into his heart and his administration? What, shall I wish to be able to transfer to him the folly and cruelty which I condemn in an earthly parent, of spoiling his children by indulgence? Let me know that he has ceased in faithfulness to afflict me, and has given me up to unsanctified and injurious prosperity, and I can no longer trust him. I shall then be afraid of his very mercy. His love would terrify me, since it might be the means of my destruction, as well as his justice and his power. I should be afraid to ask him for another earthly comfort, lest it should be given to me for my injury, and I should look upon all that remains with suspicion, lest he were gratifying me now, at the expense of my salvation hereafter. Take away his faithfulness in afflicting me, and the raptures awakened by the music of that language, "God is love," would all subside into fear, doubt, and despondency. Nay, it is an expression, not only without meaning, but without truth, for God's faithfulness is a part of his very love.

Such then are the truths contained in the text. Such the balm of Gilead which the Divine Physician applies for healing the wounds of those who will put themselves into his hands.

II. Let us now consider the certainty expressed: I know that thy judgments are right.

This was not the language of conjecture, of speculation, or merely of hope, but of assured conviction. "I know." How frequently do we find that triumphant word on the page of inspiration, and find it used there in reference to topics more momentous than any

other to the soul of man, and at the same time more remote than any other from the reach of unaided human reason. "The true God, whom to know is eternal life." "I know that my Redeemer liveth." "I know in whom I have believed." "We know that if the earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." Such is the manner, the confident manner, in which sacred Scripture enables us to speak of God, of Providence, of Christ, of salvation, of heaven, of eternity. Transcendent privilege! To rise out of the dim shadows, the twilight glimpses of conjecture and hope, into the broad day-light of assured knowledge, and as from the mount of promise, to see the holy land of truth, with all its glorious doctrines stretching out before us in grand and beautiful perspective.

We know also that God's judgments are right, and that his afflictive dispensations are but the awful visitations of love. But how? Not, I repeat, by unaided reason. No. No. She knows nothing about the matter. She has nothing to hold up to us but her dark lantern of speculation, imagination, and conjecture. She cannot utter a syllable of comfort to the troubled spirit, to the riven heart. To the weeping sufferer at her oracle, asking the question, "Who has afflicted me, and for what purpose?" she returns not a word of information, not a whisper of consolation. No: it is to the Bible we are indebted for this truth; the book of God, the oracle of heaven; and never is the worth of this precious volume so accurately known or so experimentally felt, as in the season of affliction and the chamber of death, where no other book can shed one ray of comfort or of hope. It were vain to quote particular passages;

it is the substance of the whole volume. The doctrine that there is a comprehensive, minute, all-wise Providence, and that all providential dispensations towards the people of God, however afflictive, are expressions of faithful love, and in close connexion and harmony with the designs of the cross of Christ, is conveyed in every part of the Word of God; we meet with it every where; it comes smilingly upon us in every walk of weeping, and in every scene of woe; from the Old Testament and the New; from the Psalms and the Prophets; from the Gospels and the Epistles. Taking the Bible in our hand, whether we are agonizing on a bed of sickness, or dwelling amidst the privations of poverty, or standing at the grave of all that was dearest to us upon earth, or leaving our friends, and treading, amidst the most afflictive circumstances, the dark valley of the shadow of death, we may exclaim, "I know, O God, that thy judgments are right, and that in faithfulness thou hast afflicted me."

And we know this also from the revealed character of God. He is just, and wise, and good. It is our bliss to be assured of this. To his natural perfections of eternity, intelligence, power, and immensity, is added every moral attribute, in infinite perfection. What he is in himself, that he is in his doings. His acts are ever the manifestations of his nature. A just God must be just in his dispensations: a wise God must express his wisdom in his conduct: a God of love must transfuse his benevolence through his whole administration. His providence is himself in action, as his perfections are himself in a state of repose. Knowing God, therefore, as we do know him in the Bible, we know

that his judgments are all right. Still it becomes us to recollect that as we cannot comprehend his infinite attributes, so neither can we comprehend his wondrous plans. His scheme of providence must, like himself, be vast. Hence his language, "My thoughts are not your thoughts; neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord; for as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts higher than your thoughts." Nothing can be more instructive and encouraging than this lofty language, so worthy of God, and so humbling to us. All events that happen to us are God's ways: all God's ways are the result of his thoughts, for he does not, like man, act without thinking; and all his thoughts are infallibly wise and good. He does many things we should never think of doing, if we could do them; he leaves many things undone, which we should do if we had the power; and he does many things which we should do, but he does them in a different manner, and at other times than we should deem proper. His ways and thoughts relate to the whole of our interests, past, present, and future; ours only to the present. His ways and thoughts combine our interests with the general scheme of his providence; ours relate to our own affairs exclusively. The difference between the thoughts of an archangel and a little child, cannot be so great as between those of God and the highest archangel. What poor judges then are we of God's ways and thoughts! Let us conceive of a child criticising the policy of a universal monarch, and the presumption of this is nothing to the folly of man's condemning the ways and thoughts of God. While, therefore, we infer

from God's wisdom and love, the wisdom and love of his dispensations, we infer no less consequently their mystery from his infinitude.

III. We will now consider the state of mind manifested in this passage.

Here is expressed a proper sense of the nature, in themselves, of the painful events which befal us. They are viewed as "judgments," and felt to be afflictions. "In faithfulness thou hast afflicted me." It was as if the Psalmist has said, "I am afflicted; nature feels the blow; I tremble and quiver in every nerve with the pain it occasions; but still I know it is for my good." There is no sin in tears, no rebellion in groans: they not only belong to humanity, but to Christianity. Before you reproach me for my tears, go to the grave of Lazarus, and upbraid the Son of God with weakness, for there "Jesus wept," and from that hour made christian sorrow not only sinless, but virtuous. Christianity offers no violence to our nature; it does not tear up with rude hand the affections of the soul, but only represses their wild luxuriance. We do not become less than men, or more than men, when we become Christians, but only better men. Insensibility is no friend to piety. It is not on the rock that the seed vegetates, but in the soil moistened by the shower. Not to feel God's visitation, is to despise the chastening of the Lord; as to feel too much, is to faint when we are rebuked of him.

Here is manifested the absence of all disposition to murmur, repine, and rebel against the appointments of God. The language indicates a heart, as well as a tongue, free from hard thoughts of God. Murmuring, complaining; what, from man against God! From poor, feeble, ignorant man, who is of yesterday, and

crushed before the moth; against the infinite, eternal, omniscient God, because he disconcerts our schemes, disappoints our hopes, destroys our comforts! It is for the fulfilment of his own purposes, and the display of his own perfections, and not merely to put us to pain, and to sport with our tears. What are our schemes, our hopes, our comforts, to his plans, purposes, and glory! Man repine against God! O strange compound of folly and wickedness! Conceive of the meanest insect in a mighty empire, endued with a spark of intellect, and employing that gleam of understanding in petulance, sullenness, or rebellion against the monarch of the realm, because some of his mighty schemes of national polity disturbed this insect's repose! Even this is no just illustration of the daring presumption of man's murmuring against God, because of the disappointment of his hopes, or the destruction of his comforts. It becomes us, however, to recollect that the heart must be kept from repining as well as the lips; rebellious thoughts and feelings must also be suppressed.

This language is expressive of the deepest submission to the will of God. By submission is meant not a stoical apathy that does not feel; nor a reluctant yielding to a power we cannot resist; nor a sullen silence that does not murmur, merely because it is afraid to do so, but an acquiescence in what God does as right, and an approval of what he does as good. Would you see examples of it, behold Aaron when his two sons were slain, standing mute before God, the destroyer of them both. Hear Job exclaiming amidst the loss of everything, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, and blessed be the name of the Lord." Hear David,

"I was dumb, I opened not my mouth, because thou didst it." Hear Eli saying, "It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good." But above all, behold the deepest and most dignified of sufferers, when the hour of his agony had come, and listen to his language, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt." There, ye afflicted ones, there is submission, its living type, its perfect exemplification: in that Holy Saviour there was a deep sense of agony, a prayer to have it shortened; and yet a willingness if it were God's will, to endure it. Patience there had its perfect work; and let us all seek for Divine aid thus gracefully to take the cup which our Father has mixed for us, assured that however bitter, it contains no poison.

Here in the text also is expressed confidence in God, that some gracious design is comprehended in his painful visitations, and that they will terminate in some merciful result. Yes, it is the language of faith interpreting for good, what sense and reason would construe into nothing but evil. It is faith expecting the fertilising shower from the very cloud which has launched the destructive bolt. It is faith, which in the painful deprivation, sees the approach of a coming mercy casting its dark shadow before it. It is faith, saying, "I hear the voice of love, though it speak in thunder; and feel the hand of mercy, though it is smiting me for my good." It is faith, assuring its possessor that under the black seal and dark envelope, there is still a message and purpose of love. It is faith, ascending her watch tower, putting herself in the posture of expectation, and looking out for the blessing, though she does not know from what quarter,

at what time, or in what form, the blessing will come, yet still believing it will come.

What a comprehension of meaning, then, is there in that noble confession, "I know that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me."

Such are the lessons which we are all come into the sanctuary this morning to learn, but which are especially addressed to that group of mourners whom I see before me, and to one above all the rest, and which from them are reflected back upon the preacher's own mind and heart: and oh, how much easier does he find it to prescribe than to practise them. How much do we all need, and how earnestly do we implore the aid of Divine grace, to kiss the hand that has smitten us, and to love God, not only in his providential dispensations, but even for them. How much sympathy have we received for which we are thankful, but how sorrowfully are we made to feel that it is an affliction which nothing can effectually alleviate, but the compassion of Him who is able to succour them that are tempted, not only by the tenderness of his sympathy, but by the sufficiency of his grace.

And now, what impressive inferences might be deduced from this subject, viewed in connexion with the event which has suggested it.

Surely nothing can more affectingly or more impressively remind us of the vanity, uncertainty, and unsatisfying nature of all earthly bliss. What a bright vision of earthly happiness has been suddenly dissolved in gloom and desolation: and what a transition made in a few short hours from the fondest hopes to the bitterest disappointment! This world was never intended, even

in its purest and most rational enjoyments, and its richest and most valuable possessions, to be the portion of the soul of man, the home of his heart; and these sudden irruptions of the mighty spoiler into the circle of our domestic delights, sorrowfully prove it. If, therefore, we determine to stake our whole felicity on anything so fugitive and so frail as human life, we do it against the remonstrances of Scripture, the evidences of our senses, and the bitterness of our experience. With what emphasis does Providence, as well as Scripture, now say to us, "Set your affections on things above, and not on things upon the earth, for ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." When the blossoms of earthly enjoyment have withered and fallen, and nothing is left, in reference to them, but blighted hopes, let us pluck by faith the fruit of the tree of life in the midst of the Paradise of God. Earth has failed, but heaven remains. Death has robbed us of one that seemed sent to bless us; but, "God lives, and blessed be my rock, and let the God of my salvation be exalted." There is less for us to love on earth, but we are not without hope, there is now more for us to love in heaven. From the wreck of our mortal joys, may God grant that our aspirations may rise with new vigour to heaven, that region of undying life, that seat of unwithering delight, which is ever, "attracting to itself whatever is congenial to its nature; enriching itself by the spoils of earth, and collecting within its capacious bosom whatever is pure, permanent, and divine; leaving nothing for the last fire to consume but the objects and slaves of concupiscence; while everything which grace has prepared and beautified, shall be

gathered from the ruins of the world, to adorn the eternal city, which hath no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it, for the glory of God doth enlighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." And can we, with such a proof, and such a warning, be unconcerned or unmindful of the frailty of human life? What a voice comes up from the sepulchre below, how much more solemn, affecting, and awful, than that which now addresses you. Ah, how much more impressive, in this case, is the mute eloquence of the sleeper in the tomb, than the living words of the preacher in the pulpit: "Be ye ready, for at such an hour as ye think not, the Son of Man cometh."

No less sudden than the death of that amiable and lovely bride, whose decease has given occasion to this discourse and involved the whole congregation in grief, may be yours; though it is barely possible that it may be in circumstances so deeply touching. You may be hurried away from life, as abruptly as she was, though you will not, in all probability, be led away from scenes so calculated to awaken the tenderest emotions. O, "who foretold this event, who conjectured it, who detected at a distance the faintest presage of its approach, which when it arrived mocked the efforts of human skill, as much by their incapacity to prevent, as their inability to foresee it?" Unmoved by the tears of conjugal affection, or of parental entreaty, inexorable death hastened to execute his stern commission, leaving nothing to survivors but to retire, to weep, and to submit.

Was it necessary for you, my flock, as well as for us, she should die, that you might be roused to consider your latter end? O may you then follow out the designs

of Providence; and should this sudden extinction of such bright hopes, and this fading into darkness and desolation, of such beautiful prospects, be the means of leading some of you to a devout, practical, and saving consideration of your mortality, we will find in that fact, an additional motive to submission, nor querulously ask, why no expedient more mild in itself, and less costly to us, might not have sufficed to accomplish this end. Wherefore, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; since there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest."

This discourse, uniting, as it was intended to do, general principles, with allusions to the melancholy event which gave occasion for it, is now, and thus, addressed to you, the people of my charge, and of my affection: and this is done not so much to awaken or sustain your sympathy for the bereaved, as for the purpose of comforting your hearts under your own present trials, or any others, through which your Heavenly Father may yet call you to pass.

On whatever painful events and deep mysteries you look back as you survey the year that is closing: or as you take a still longer retrospect over other years that preceded it, I beg you to apply to them all, the principles laid down in the foregoing pages; in these, when really believed, will be found a balm for every wound, a compensation for every loss, and a solution for every problem, in the scheme of divine, eternal Providence. If we are not comforted, it is because we refuse the cup

of consolation which our Father hath provided for us. It is in the furnace of affliction that we should seek for grace, not only to have our dross consumed, but to let the gold display its genuineness and its brightness. The trials of another year are past, and they can never be endured again, though similar ones may await you. They, at any rate, are gone, whatever else remains. And can you be otherwise than grateful and astonished at the manner in which you have been carried through them? Suppose that all you now know by experience and by memory in looking back; all the scenes of anguish through which you have passed; all the bitter days, and nights more bitter, which you have spent in that one annual period of your life, could have been comprehended in one view, and presented to you, at the beginning of the year, would not the mere anticipation have crushed you? And yet you have gone through it. There you are, not indeed self-sustained, no, but God-sustained. Give him the glory, and the praise due unto his name: and say, "It is of the Lord's mercies I am not consumed, because his compassions fail not." Raise your Ebenezer, and though, in recollection of joys departed never to return, you water it with your tears, still in no less vivid remembrance of the support you have obtained, let the finger of gratitude write the inscription, "Hitherto the Lord hath helped me."

And now in what state of mind are you about to cross the threshold of the coming year? What new lessons learnt in the school of affliction; what rich, ripe fruits of sanctified trials; what better preparation to meet yet future tribulation, and especially the closing scene of life's pilgrimage, are you carrying over into

that period of your existence, which you are now expecting? There may be such future tribulation. We ought not by a gloomy imagination to create trials, and then scare ourselves with what may be only the dark shadows of our own trouble-making thoughts; but still, while we hope for the best, we should prepare for the worst. Can you, then, while looking at the cloud of the unknown future, say, "The closing year is not leaving me as it found me. Through divine grace I hope I have gained in submission, what I have lost in comfort. My conscience and I are somewhat more at peace. I have not only less of the world to love, but I love what is left of the world less. I am less afraid of trouble, because I am more confident in God. The objects of sense have vanished, but the objects of faith appear to me more distinctly visible, and far more luminous. I feel as if I can trust God with and for every thing." Is it thus with you? If so, pray for grace that you may persevere in these views and feelings: that they may go with you through another year. In such a state of mind, come what will, you are prepared; you "will not be afraid of evil tidings, your heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord."

It will be well to carry your views still further: not only great trouble, but the last trouble, may come upon you next year. Multitudes will die next year, as multitudes have died the past. In all probability you will begin the next year on earth, but can you go so far as to say in all probability you will close it on earth? On the first church-meeting night of the next year, how many of your fellow members who began the year with you, will have their names read out upon the list of the

dead; and what security have you that yours will not be on the next calendar? Are you ready, quite ready? Are you in the state in which you would wish to be when the messenger comes to call you into the presence of God? Is there no duty now neglected, which you would wish not to be found neglected then? No temper, corruption, or inconsistency unmortified now, which you would not wish to be unmortified then? Be sure to have nothing to do then in the way of sorrowfully looking back, or of doubtfully looking inwards, so that all your few last fragments of time may be spent in joyfully looking up and looking on. You cannot be too well prepared for the last and most momentous thing that is to be encountered upon earth, and for the nearest point to eternity. Let your chief solicitude then be concentrated on that one subject, on which God concentrates his in all the afflictions wherewith he chastens you, which is that you may "be partakers of his holiness." He has thus let you into the secret of his purposes, and made it evident that the end of his dealings is to transform you into his image: every tear that rolls down your cheek, and every groan that rends your heart, says, "Be holy."

Well, and suppose you are closing the last year of your life, what then? Why the long series of trials with which God, in the fidelity of his love, has seen fit to afflict you, is almost at an end, and the blessed result of all this corrective discipline is about to be realised. The storms that now burst upon you, and the billows that now roll over you, are endured at the very entrance of the haven of everlasting repose. You are just going into port, to drop your anchor, furl your sails, and

amidst the multitudes that throng the celestial strand to bid you welcome to their happy world, to exclaim, with adoring wonder, gratitude, and love, "Then I am in heaven." What scenes will then burst upon your view. Some seraph's voice, pointing to the multitude of the redeemed, among whom are some dear to you on earth, shall say, "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

It is, however, not only probable, but certain, that this discourse will not come into the hands of some who shall read it, till they have passed over into the new year; and it may be very proper to insert a few hints suitable to their circumstances. It is scarcely necessary to ask them to be grateful that they are spared during the last year; but it may not be so unnecessary to ask, what their condition would have been now; what world they would have been inhabiting if they had died: they would have been somewhere; where? In the celestial city, or in the bottomless pit? Surely, surely, a creature whose every day's existence is a step to eternity, should ask, "Where will the last step, which for aught I can tell, may be to-morrow, land me?" Well then, ask where, if this step should be taken this year, it will

land you, if you die as you are? Do you look back upon the past year with regret for any part of your conduct, or with dissatisfaction and suspicion about your state? What, and shall it be thus also at the end of the next year? Will you spend all your years in this way? Regretting at the end of each, the manner in which you have lived? Is it not quite time to alter, and a blessed thing you can alter, and that you are not where, whatever regrets you may feel, they will be unavailing? Begin this year by beginning a new life. "Yield yourself to God." Lay hold, by faith in Christ, of eternal life. Ponder that wondrous word eternity; take it up again, and say eternity! "I am going to eternity, living for eternity. What kind of a being ought I to be, to be able to endure an eternal existence, and not feel such existence an intolerable burden." Acquire a deeper sense of the end, and value, and importance of life. What is your life? Apart from religion, salvation, eternity, a shadow, a dream: but viewed in connexion with these matters, a substance, a reality, an infinite possession. Consider it thus, employ it thus. Get what you will of knowledge, wealth, fame, and live as long as you may to enjoy it; yet, if this be all, die when you will, life to you will have been a lost adventure. Lessen your attachments to life for its own sake; for each year as it flies, takes away something of the object of your affection, and ought therefore to reduce the force of the passion itself. Life is of less value by a year than it was twelve months ago: but while you love it less for its own sake, love it more for the sake of eternity and salvation. What remains of it, viewed in relation to these matters,

becomes more and more precious every year. What the value of that year, that month, that week must be, on which eternal life is suspended! and perhaps it is all that is left you.

Consider, the plan you lay down for the coming year, may be the plan for eternity; and how ought such a plan to be laid? Suppose you were scheming for a century, or the age of Methuselah, what care should be taken in your arrangements to make no mistake. Think, then, of a plan of life, which may extend its results through millions of millions of ages, and an eternity beyond all this! Shall I then prescribe a plan, which if this year you shall die, will secure to you an eternity of bliss, and shall make this year, if it shall be your last, your birth-year for immortality? Take the following.

You are a sinner, repent with a broken heart and a contrite spirit. God has loved you so as to give his only begotten Son, that believing in him, you might not perish, but have everlasting life. Receive the offered mercy, by sincere, cordial faith. As a believer, love him who has first loved you. Manifest your love, by a willing, cheerful obedience to all his commandments. Adopt the apostle's rule and object, and say, "For me to live is Christ." Let his love constrain you, his example guide you. Rejoice in him, and enjoy the peace that passeth understanding. Let the joy of the Lord be your strength. Pray much; and especially for the help of the Divine Spirit. You need this help to perform your duties, to bear your trials, to resist temptation, and to overcome sin, Satan, and the world. Be never satisfied with present attainments, but grow in

grace. Seeing you know not the day of your death, die daily. Consider life as a state of probation and discipline for heaven, and be ever meetening for glory. Attend diligently upon all the means of grace, public, domestic, social, and private. Cultivate a devotional spirit, and unite with it a tenderness of conscience. Walk with God, both in private and before men. Have confidence in him, in all your trials. Be ever looking for that blessed hope, the glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ. Thus living, you have nothing to fear from the disclosures of the year; and should it be the last, it will then be the best, for you will have an abundant entrance administered to you, into the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I remain,

My beloved Flock,

Your affectionate Pastor,

J. A. JAMES.

THE RIVULET CONTROVERSY.

A TRACT FOR THE TIMES,

ON

SPEAKING THE TRUTH IN LOVE:

BEING

A SERMON

PREPARED FOR DELIVERY AT THE

MEETING OF THE CONGREGATIONAL UNION, MDCCCLVI;

WHICH WOULD IN COURSE HAVE BEEN HELD AT CHELTENHAM,
IN AUTUMN MDCCCLVI, BUT WAS NOT CONVENED.

"Truth and love are two of the most powerful things in the world, and when they go together, they cannot easily be withstood. The golden beams of truth, and the silken cords of love twisted together, will draw men, with sweet violence, whether they will or no." CUDWORTH.

INTRODUCTION.

Before it was determined not to hold this year the Autumnal Meeting of the Congregational Union, I was requested to preach on the occasion ; and as "The Rivulet Controversy" had then commenced, and had already become "a root of bitterness," it was wished that I should select a subject bearing upon it, and I was urged to the performance of the duty by the suggestion, that by so doing I might promote the cause of truth and love, and do something to stop the growth of a schism in our body. In addition to the difficulty I felt in the way of compliance, arising from physical infirmity, which makes me wish to retire as much as possible from public services, I saw that the present unhappy circumstances of our body required more wisdom and power in the preacher on such an occasion than I thought I possessed. However, I consented, with the determination to adapt my discourse as much as possible, "without partiality and without hypocrisy," to the existing controversy.

The Sermon, which is now printed, with some few additions, from the very manuscript which I should have used at Cheltenham had the meeting been held, was prepared with some care and not a little anxiety, that I might deliver my own soul with all fidelity, and yet not give just offence to any.

It is, I know, an unusual act, and may have the semblance of vanity, to print a sermon which was only intended to be delivered, since it has not the apology for publication, which a request from those who heard a discourse sometimes offers, for its appearance from the press. But it certainly did occur to me, that if there were any thing in it at all calculated to allay the heat of controversy, and soften the asperity of discordant thought and feeling, the same effect might, by God's blessing, be produced by the reading of it in the

closet, as perhaps might have been done by the hearing of it from the pulpit.

It would have been altogether unseemly, and have defeated the object of the Sermon, to have entered at such a time into the details and merits of this unhappy strife ; a strife which affords another and a painful illustration of the apostle's words, "Behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth :" and it is but too evident that nearly all he says of the tongue, is applicable to the pen, and that the one seems almost as untameable and ungovernable, and as full of unruly evil and deadly poison as the other. As I do not in the discourse, so I shall not in this preface, attempt the delicate and difficult task of adjudicating between the contending parties. With myriads both within our denomination and without it, I call for an end of this angry and truculent warfare, which has not now, if it ever had, the dignity and decorum of a contest for truth; but is become a conflict of personalities, in which "the meekness of wisdom" is exchanged for bitter irony, envenomed sarcasm, irreligious banter, and coarse, offensive, not to say, profane, satire. It is thus that wise men make sport for fools, and ministers of the sanctuary scatter about "fire-brands, arrows and death." For my own part, while I would do nothing to compromise truth, and am entirely convinced that we have something to fear for its cause and interests among ourselves; and while I hold that every pinnacle of its temple, as well as its foundation, must be guarded from the rude assaults of error, and not the least particle of it be bartered for the greatest amount of charity, I am still of the mind of the good Lord Falkland, who while engaged in the conflicts of the Commonwealth, exclaimed, with the sword at his side, and while ever ready to fight for his party, "Peace, peace; I want peace." Oh that there were magnanimity enough in all the combatants on this inglorious field, where our brethren are shooting poisoned arrows at each other, for them to come forward, and lamenting the broken unity, the blighted peace, the tarnished beauty, the prostrate energy, and humbled honours of our denomination, to say before the public and each other, "In the midst of passion which has fallen upon us, we have all a little lost our way from the path of truth and love; we confess our errors, and withdrawing critiques, protests, letters, songs, and pamphlets, we forgive each other and bury all in oblivion, except a pure zeal for the truth and a determination to speak the truth in love."

The apostle in writing to the Corinthian church, asked its members if they were reduced so low, that there was not a wise man

among them, whom they could appoint as umpire to settle their disputes. How many are asking the same question of our denomination. Have we no enlightened, judicious and zealous laymen, who will step forward between the combatants, and say, "Sirs, ye are brethren, why do ye wrong one to another?" We must have peace, and have it on grounds just and honourable to all. It will never do to go on after this fashion. Ten thousand reproachful voices are asking, "Where is your religion?" Infidelity is hovering like a vulture over the scene of our conflict, to gorge its appetite with the slaughtered characters of christian brethren. The battle must be stopped. We want our strength for other purposes than this internecine conflict, "which has all the pains of military warfare, without its recompense, and all the hardihood of chivalry, without its generosity." Our institutions, both for home and foreign evangelization, and for denominational objects, require that time, attention and energy, which we are expending upon mutual annoyance and molestation.

I have lately read with considerable anxiety a letter from a very respectable individual calling upon the brethren who signed the protest to withdraw that document, under, (shall I call it), the threat, of their exclusion from the pulpit and the platform of the congregation to which he belongs. In this matter my friend has carried his opposition to the protesters quite too far. No one can be more entirely convinced than I am that, to use the words of Mr. Binney, "the protest was an error." Yes, I say, a signal error, and one of the chief causes of all that has followed; but I can never consent that its authors, even though they should not withdraw their protest, (which I heartily wish they would,) should be considered unworthy to appear as the advocates of our missionary, or any other institutions. Their well-known character places them too high in public estimation for this. Let us take heed that this affair does not become a cancerous and incurable schism in our denomination, of which as things are going, there appears to be some danger.

May a spirit of profound humiliation be poured out upon our Churches, for this deplorable and ominous position of our body, and may incessant, importunate, and believing prayer go up to Him, who is the Lover, Giver, and Guardian of peace, that he would be pleased to heal the wounds that have been inflicted, reconcile the hearts which have been alienated, and restore the love, confidence, and harmony which have been impaired. And may the words of the Apostle, so tender, so authoritative, and so suited to our circumstances, be

heard with reverence and awe; "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace to the hearers; and grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: and be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake, has forgiven you. Be ye, therefore, followers of God as dear children: and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us and hath given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God, for a sweet smelling savour."

J. A. JAMES.

I ENTER the pulpit this evening with unusual solicitude; for if a minister of Christ ought never to rise in his place, even on an ordinary occasion, without some fear and trembling, and a sense of responsibility both to God and his flock for the utterance of his lips, how much deeper and more solemn should be his emotions when he is called to address, as I am now, not only those who are hearers of the gospel, but also very many of its preachers. The general aspect of the times in regard to those great doctrines which have been considered by us as essential and fundamental articles of religious belief, and the particular discussions respecting them which have lately been carried on within our own denomination, make me somewhat painfully anxious to speak what I consider to be the truth as it is in Jesus with all fidelity, and yet at the same time with all the meekness of wisdom, and all the gentleness of love; so that while delivering my own soul, I may not be permitted to say any thing which would inflame the wounds I am anxious to heal. "May my words be worthy of the audience, worthy of the occasion, worthy of the topics, and above all, worthy of Him, before whom we must all shortly stand. But such as they are despise them not, if there be echo in them, however feeble, of God's own word."

The Epistle to the Ephesians iv, 15.

Speaking the Truth in Love.

To save time I pass by the magnificent context, leaving it for your own intelligent criticism and exegesis, and at once take up the text as an abstract proposition, complete in isolation, and imposing upon all, and especially upon us ministers, a most incumbent and momentous duty. "Speaking the truth in love," does not refer primarily, if at all, to veracity between man and man, but to our expression, and our mode of expression, of the truth as it is in Jesus, whether in the way of didactic teaching, defence, or controversy, whether by the pen or by word of mouth, whether by ministers in their public ministrations, or by other persons in the ordinary intercourse of life. It is a general rule, commanding and directing us that whenever truth is upon our lips, love shall be in our hearts and upon our tongues, so that our faith and our charity shall be equally conspicuous in all we say. I shall apply this rule on the present occasion chiefly to the ministerial enunciation of truth, whether from the pulpit or the press. And I think these few beautiful words give to us the subject and the spirit of our ministry.

I. The subject of our ministrations. We are not only the teachers of truth, but of the truth; and not only of religious, but of christian, truth. We minister, of course, at the altar of the God of nature and providence; but this stands only in the vestibule of the temple of truth, and our chief service is at the altar of the God of redemption, which points and leads to the mercy seat in the holy of holies. Ours is "the

ministry of reconciliation" between God and a revolted world: than which there is nothing higher for the highest ambition to seek or possess.

All that is put forward as truth, and claims to be such, must appeal to some standard by which its claims are to be tried. And what is the standard of christian truth? Not our own intuitional consciousness, for objective Christianity is a collection of facts to be tried by their own evidence, and not by the evidence suggested by our reason, for they are themselves facts of which reason can know nothing but as they are revealed to it, and for which it can find no vouchers in itself. Not the authority of the church, for the church is composed of fallible men, and multiply fallibles as you may, they can never make infallibility. Not creeds and articles, catechisms and formularies, for whatever may be the value of these, (and value they have as exponents of opinion, discriminators of systems, bases of communion, and subordinate breakwaters against the waves of error,) they must all themselves be tried by the Word of God, and cannot be the test of truth. But it will be a dark day for Protestant Nonconformity; (may such a day never dawn!) when a creed, either expressed or implied, shall be no longer considered as, in some sense, a basis of fellowship, a bond of union, and a medium of communion; such a place, either by a lex non scripta, if not a lex scripta, it already has and must have in all churches. But the only infallible standard of truth is the Word of God. The Bible, and the Bible alone, is the religion, not only of Protestants but of Christians; and when men can be brought to gather round this fountain of truth, and there "purify their much abused vision from the scales of prejudice and passion," a

better understanding and a more general agreement of the meaning of the Word will be arrived at. Angry controversies and legal restraints will do little for this object, "for unless an angel were to descend for that purpose, the spirit of strife is a disease not to be healed by the troubling of the waters."

But what is it that gives the Bible its authority as the standard of truth? Its inspiration: and the main object of the father of lies, the centre of the policy of pandemonium, in this day, is to prove that inspiration in its higher sense falters before a rigid criticism. "My brethren," says the venerable Archdeacon Law, in an admirable charge to his clergy, "unless we are content to fall before the insidious errors of the day, we must take our stand upon the rock of an inspired Bible. When final and irrevocable appeal to this fails, we lose our vantage ground. Our noblest victories in the great fight of faith can then only win the palm of probability. Nothing in theology is certain, if the inspiration of the Bible be not so. If texts be disputable proof, our whole ministry is but a doubtful argument." Not only are the nerves and sinews of our strength dried up, but our shield is lost, the point of our sword is blunted, and truth is exposed defenceless to the weapons of error. When inspiration is gone, the hedge around the sacred vine of scripture is broken down, and the boar out of the wood will waste it. We must, for the adjustment of controversy, and the settlement of religious truth, have infallibility somewhere, and if we cannot find it in the Bible, it is no matter of wonder that some go and seek for it in the church. Take away inspiration, or reduce it to the level, or to an approximation to the level, of Homer, Milton, and Shakespeare, as modern theorists

would do, and what have we left in the Bible, but the opinion of men fallible as ourselves, with better information it is true, but still fallible, whose dicta being liable to be wrong, we are at liberty not only to sift but also to reject them.

But we now go on to ask, not whether the Bible is true, but what is the truth in the Bible. Never was a more important question asked than that which Pilate proposed to the illustrious prisoner at his bar, What is truth? and if our Lord deigned not to answer it, his silence was not intended to manifest that he thought the query beneath his notice, but to rebuke the frivolity, not only of the querist, but of all others who in subsequent ages should trifle with a subject, so serious and of such tremendous importance. Truth is the greatest, and the most solemn thing in the universe, next to the God of truth; and demands to be approached with something of the reverential awe with which we draw near to its divine source. But, again I ask, what is truth? A thousand things are true, which are not worthy to be called truth, much less the truth. And what oracle shall give out the response? To discover this all the noblest intellects of ancient and modern times have engaged in exploratory researches. The mightiest minds have kindled their lamps and gone into the dark regions of the terra incognita. But, set aside the records of inspiration, we are still in the condition of the ancient sages, floating upon an ocean of doubt and conjecture, saying, "Who can tell, peradventure;" and we shall arrive at that temper and spirit, which in modern times has transformed the natural thirst after truth into the hydrophobia of a homeless and incurable scepticism.

When Pilate asked his question, there, veiled under

the form of that despised and rejected man who stood as a criminal at his bar, stood this mighty, glorious, and hitherto mysterious and undiscovered thing, which thousands of the mightiest intellects on earth had sought for in vain. One of the sublimest expressions that ever dropped from the lips of the Great Teacher, when upon earth, was this, "I am the truth." To the sound of those words heaven and earth might have listened with rapture, as solving the problems and relieving the solicitudes, of forty generations. Yes, Jesus Christ is truth incarnate, as well as love incarnate. Hence the apostle's emphatic expression, "The truth, as it is in Jesus." Christ is the centre of all religious truth, where all its lines meet as in a focus, and from thence radiate with brilliant splendour to the extremities of the universe. In the divinity of his person, and his work of mediation as prophet, priest, and king, consists all-momentous truth. And is it not matter of unutterable wonder, joy, and gratitude, to see truth, not in abstract dogmas, articles, and propositions, but in this concrete form! It is indeed a glorious thing to see truth doctrinal, enshrined thus in the person of its Divine Author.

If, out of the numerous doctrines which have their centre in Christ, I were to select one, which includes or implies all the rest, and which deserves the emphasis of *the* truth, it is the atonement. By the atonement I mean the death of Christ, as a vicarious sacrifice for the sins of the world. The death of Christ upon the cross is designed to be a manifestation of divine justice, in harmony with mercy, and not merely a manifestation of love apart from justice. How clearly is this proved by the apostle, where he says, "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to

declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, to declare, I say, his righteousness, that he might be just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus." Here in the compass of these two verses, justice is three times declared to be that attribute of God which is specially regarded in the death of Christ, and in what way but by atonement can justice be thus manifested? Had love been the only attribute of God's nature to be consulted by a system of mediation, the cross would have been little better than an incumbrance upon it, an opaque object to eclipse it, instead of a clear transparent medium to reveal it. Without this doctrine of atonement, as including personal substitution and real propitiation, there seems to be no correspondence between the gospel as the substance and the shadow of the law. The deepest wants of human nature and its most urgent cravings, as made known in the sacrificial rites of all nations, are left unsatisfied, the brightest glories of the Godhead are unrevealed, the elements of revealed truth sink to chaos, the light of salvation is extinguished for ever, and the hope of a guilty world must set in eternal despair. To deny the atonement, or which is the same thing, to deny its relation to justice and moral government, and to make its essence to consist in example rather than substitution, is not so much to misunderstand, as unintentionally no doubt, but really, to contradict the Scripture. This great doctrine is the life's blood which sends warmth, vitality, and action through the whole body of truth. Take away this, and to my perception, you leave nothing but a corpse. It is the key-stone in the arch which locks the whole in beauty and firmness. Remove this, and the whole becomes a heap of ruin. It is the one pervading

idea that unites all parts of the Bible in harmonious teaching. Blot out this, and all that remains is incoherent and unmeaning as the leaves which the sibyl scattered to the wind.

And let us not be satisfied with a counterfeit atonement which retains the word, but rejects the idea of which it is the sign. Even the Pantheists of Germany, and those of them the widest from the truth, have in some cases couched their rampant infidelity under scripture terms. We must have not only evangelical words but evangelical ideas. Atonement does not signify a moral effect upon us by the death of Christ, but the moral purpose of God. It means, if it mean anything, a vindication and illustration of the divine justice, as well as the manifestation of mercy in the pardon of the transgressor. It means, under the christian dispensation, the same in reference to moral guilt, that it meant under the Jewish dispensation in reference to ceremonial offences; and in this latter it necessarily implied substitution and sacrificial efficacy, not merely in the way of producing the reformation of the offender, but of procuring pardon of his offence. We are sometimes told that the sacrificial language of the New Testament is all used figuratively in allusion to the rites and ceremonies of the Levitical economy. Instead of this, the figure was in the Old Testament, and the real truth in the New Testament. We have not gained the scriptural idea of the atonement, or propitiation, for this is the word used, till we have admitted the idea of vicarious sacrifice as a manifestation of justice.

This, beloved brethren, appears to me the truth of truths, which we must bring often into the pulpit; or without this, I should feel I had no business in it.

Another doctrine may set forth a Saviour, but I can see no salvation in his hands: may exhibit a firmament, but it is with a rayless freezing sun, or rather the sun in total eclipse: may lift up the pole, but the brazen serpent, the remedy for the venomous bite, is not there.

How truly has Dr. Guthrie said, "Here at the cross is the place in the great universe, from which God and his attributes may be best beheld and studied; it corresponds to that one spot in a noble cathedral lying right beneath the lofty dome, where the spectator commanding all the grandest features of the edifice, is instructed to look around him if he would see the monument of its architect. I scale bartizan or tower to embrace at one view the map of a mighty city. Or I climb the sides of some lofty hill to survey the landscape that lies in beauty at its feet. And had I the universe to range over, where should I go to obtain the fullest exhibition of the Godhead? Shall I soar on angel-wings to the heights of heaven, to look on its happiness and listen to angels' hymns? Shall I cleave the darkness, and sailing round the edge of the fiery gulf, listen to the wail, and weep over the misery, of the lost? No; turning from these sunny heights and doleful regions, I would remain in this world of ours, and travelling on a pilgrimage to Palestine, would stand beneath the dome of heaven with my feet on Calvary. On that consecrated spot where the cross of salvation rose and the blood of a Redeemer fell, I find the centre of a spiritual universe. Here the hosts of heaven descended to acquaint themselves with God in Christ, here concentrated, as in a burning focus, his varied attributes blend and shine."

This is as true as it is beautiful. And now I ask how this truth should be preached. Is it then really

necessary to ask or to answer such a question in reference to our ministry? I wish it were not. And if it be, how devoutly do I wish a Chalmers, a Hall, a Pye Smith, or a Wardlaw, were here to night to make the demonstration instead of the preacher who now occupies the pulpit. "Ye glorified immortals, who have gazed upon the Lamb on his throne, and seen in heavenly light the wonders of that cross, in which your noble intellects gloried upon earth, methinks with what burning and shining words you would confound that affected intellectualism, and shallow philosophy, and lawless speculation, which some are now putting in the place of the gospel of our salvation." My brethren, think you they would not say, "How speak the truth? Speak it definitely and not in vague generalities, in dim and untraceable outline, in cloudy mistiness, or in faltering faith. Let not the trumpet give an uncertain sound. Let the cross be seen in all its magnitude in distinct outline and cloudless splendour, clear and bright as the glorious sun, revealing everything, illuminating everything, warming everything." If anything should be set forth so clearly as not to be misunderstood, and so constantly as not to be forgotten, it surely must be that truth by which immortal souls are to be saved from hell and raised to heaven. To render this indistinct, and liable to be mistaken or overlooked, by profound intellectualism, abstract philosophizing, excessive elaboration, redundant rhetoric, or affected obscurity of style, is so to veil truth that it cannot be seen; or changing the figure, is so to dilute the elixir of life as to destroy its potency and efficacy. Let us not merely so speak the truth as that men may understand it, but so as that

they shall be scarcely able to misunderstand it; so as that the most perplexed and doubting shall go from our ministrations, exclaiming, I have found it.

Would not those glorified spirits, could they speak to us from their heavenly abode, charge us to preach the truth in all its fulness? God deals with man as a rational creature, and both removes his guilt and renews and sanctifies his heart, through the medium of his intellect, by the belief of the truth. Look into nature, and you will see that vegetable life is sustained and animal life invigorated by the light of the sun. So in the world of grace, spiritual and eternal life is produced and supported by the light of truth as it radiates from the Sun of Righteousness. Nor is it by any kind of light that the processes of nature are carried forward, but by the splendour of the orb of day. Kindle millions of torches, illuminate the atmosphere with a phosphorescent conflagration, adorn the heavens with the coruscations of a perpetual Aurora Borealis, all this will be grand, striking, and will attract attention: but not a plant will grow, not an animal will thrive. No, there must be the light of the sun, or there will be no life. So again is it in the world of grace. Christ said, first, "I am the truth;" then, "I am the life." If the purposes of God's mercy towards man are carried out; if sinners are converted to God; if salvation be conveyed to lost souls, it must be by the instrumentality of the truth. There may be the earth-kindled fires of rhetoric, the phosphorescence of intellect, the Aurora Borealis of genius, all employed about vague generalities of religion, and men may be gathered in crowds to admire and applaud, and there may be produced a kind

of religious feeling, but there will be no conversion of souls, no spiritual life. I may carry the analogy still further between the processes of nature and grace. It is the pure white light of the sun in all its simplicity, as it streams from his orb, without anything to discolour or dim the beam, that accomplishes best its fertilising purpose in vegetation. The most beautiful forms in which the conservatory could be constructed might add grace to the building, but not power to the light: and the most splendid hues and shapes of stained glass would rather hinder than help the growth of the plants. Yes, and it is the unobstructed beams of the great luminary of the spiritual world, the doctrine of Christ crucified set forth in its scriptural sublimity and simplicity, that will accomplish the design of God in the conversion of sinners. That high intellectualism, that philosophical cast of thought, that metaphysical abstraction, that excessive elaboration, and love of novelty and speculation, which too many of the preachers of the present day are anxious to obtain, what are they but either discontent and dissatisfaction with the pure white light of heaven's sun of truth, or a mistaken notion that it is by human intellect rather than by the influence of the Spirit that the gospel is to become the power of God unto salvation.

When therefore it is recollected that the truth is God's instrument for the accomplishment of his scheme of mercy towards this lost world: that the means by which souls are saved are not miracles, or special interpositions of Providence; or preachers raised from the dead; or angel missions from the invisible world; but the truth presented to the mind by the preacher, even more generally than by the book; how trem-

blingly anxious ought ministers to be to preach the truth, the whole truth, and I may almost add, nothing but *the* truth. Is the doctrine of the cross, I ask, the power of God unto salvation? Are men begotten to God by the truth, sanctified by the truth, and comforted by the truth? Then is it not manifest that ours should be emphatically the preaching of the cross? Everything in our ministrations should be full of Christ. I know very well that no passage of holy Scripture has been more misunderstood, more abused, more perverted, to apologise for ignorance and indolence, for a narrow theology and a stereotyped phraseology, than that noble declaration of the apostle, "I determined to know nothing among you but Jesus Christ and him crucified." Still, dear brethren, there must be a meaning in the apostle's language. The cross, in itself and its relations, is the centre of a circle as vast as the circumference of the Bible; the diameter of which extends from the first verse of Genesis to the last in the Apocalypse, which includes the law and the prophets, the gospels and epistles, the worlds of nature, providence and grace, all our history from the creation to the conflagration, the ministry of angels and the agencies of men, and all sound morality in principle, motive, and practice. I am not shutting up your talents within narrow limits, nor cramping your genius, nor adding clogs to feet eager to climb, nor hanging weights upon wings impatient to soar. I have been more than fifty years a student and preacher of the cross, and I am going off the stage lamenting how little I have made known its glories; how much of its depth I have not fathomed, and of its height I have not measured: and when I close my Bible, as I must do

ere long, it will be with a deep lament that I have left so much of it unexplored, untaught: and the same lament would be made by a Methuselah at the end of nine centuries of study of this inexhaustible doctrine. Yes, Christ must be in our preaching the alpha and omega, as he is in the Scriptures. See what the apostle himself did. See how he brought Christ into everything, at all times and on all occasions, not only for the salvation of sinners, but for the sanctification of believers. Did he urge humility and regard to each other's welfare, it was thus "Let this mind be in you, which was in Christ Jesus; who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant." Did he enjoin benevolence? it was thus, "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, though he was rich, yet for your sakes became poor, that ye through his poverty might become rich." Forgiveness of injuries? it was thus, "Forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake forgave you." And even when enjoining the common duty of conjugal affection, he placed husbands and wives before the cross, and called upon them to soften, sanctify, and cement their love by the consideration of Christ's love to them. The artist who sculptured the Minerva of the Parthenon wrought his name into the shield, so that it could not be effaced without destroying the sculpture. Did Paul work his own name into his epistles? No, but the name of his divine Lord. So let it be in our sermons. Let us lay a broad, deep, solid foundation of the truth as it is in Jesus, and upon that basis raise the whole superstructure, and a lofty one too, of ethics and experience. Let our discourses be thus

redolent with the odour of that Name which is as precious ointment poured forth, and then we ourselves, and only then, shall be a "sweet savour unto God, both in them that are saved and in them that perish."

And then, my brethren, ought not the truth to be preached with the simplicity that is in Christ, in its own dignified and divine simplicity, I say? not wrapped up and trammelled in philosophic forms of dress; not couched in mystic abstractions, or enumerated in new fantastic forms of language, coined in the Carlyle mint; but set forth in scriptural sentiment, and in the robust manly strength of our good old Saxon language. Some of our ministers, who may be sound in doctrine, give occasion by their style of writing for suspicions of heresy, it is so tinged with mysticism, so wrapped in obscurity, so characterised by peculiarity, as to render it sometimes difficult to shut out the fear that there is something unsound behind the dark veil. What we have to preach are stupendous facts, which are most powerfully told and most deeply felt, when uttered in their own glorious simplicity. Some preachers seem anxious to carve the cross with a splendid rhetoric, to render it less repulsive to men of taste; others to prop it with hard logic, to secure the approbation of your deep thinkers; and others to hide it with the drapery of modern philosophy. All such attempts are alike foolish. The power of a magnet gains nothing from the graver's or the gilder's art; its attraction lies in itself, and is diminished by foreign accretions. So is it with that greatest of all magnets, of which Christ spake when he said, "And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me." We may draw men to ourselves by genius, eloquence, eccentricity, but we can draw men to Christ

only by the attraction of his cross. I make allowance to preachers for the idiosyncracies of the human mind. Though all regenerated hearts are cast in the same mould, spiritually considered, it is not so when men are intellectually viewed. It was not so with the prophets or apostles. In their writings the human was not extinguished by the divine element. Inspiration did not set aside or shut out variety of manner, but still it maintained identity of matter. It is, and must be so, with preachers. The living creatures of the apocalypse, (in my opinion symbols of the ministry,) are varied in form, but all worship the same object, and are one in sentiment and in song. So that the cross in all its brilliant splendours, and mighty dimensions, is clearly and constantly seen in our sermons, illuminating, warming, and vivifying all, diversity of language and representation may be admitted; though even this has its limits, which are passed, when, to conciliate men of cultivated taste, the words which the Holy Ghost taught are ignored, and others introduced which do not convey the grand ideas of the originals. We hear a great deal about discarding technicalities. Let it be recollected that all other sciences, and all arts, have their technicalities, and why should not religion? If by technicalities be only meant obsolete and uncouth terms, or phrases not found in Scripture, let them be relinquished, but let us not drop Scripture phraseology. I know not that we have need to be ashamed of the terminology, call it technicalities if you please, which satisfied Hall, Chalmers, Wardlaw, Jay, and Pye Smith; or to come to younger men, McAll, and Hamilton. Discard the words of the New Testament, and the ideas will soon follow them. If a change of thought produces a change

of language, it is equally true that a change of language will sometimes bring about a change of thought.

If the truth be so important in itself as a revelation of God's plan and thoughts, and as the instrument of salvation to immortal souls, then I ask not only with what prominence, but with what boldness, earnestness, and impressiveness ought it to be spoken? It must be with no cold hearts or careless hands; with no tame indifference and sickly lukewarmness, that we touch such themes. We may preach the truth in sermons clear as crystal and withal as cold. We may deny no doctrine of orthodoxy and class ourselves amongst evangelical preachers, and yet there may be so much spurious charity, so much tolerance of error, so much superficiality of conviction, so much languor of zeal concerning the truth, that the trumpet, if it does not give an uncertain sound, sends forth a feeble one, which seems rather the lulling notes of a holiday song, than the loud and mighty blast which calls the hosts to the conflict, and inspires their hearts with the courage of heroes. Beloved brethren, I am not evoking the spirit of bigotry, let it depart to hell, its proper place; nor am I attempting to envenom your souls with the intolerance that calls down fire from heaven on those who differ from us, as I shall presently show; I am not summoning the furies to be the apostles of truth. I will as far as I know how, treat with the courtesy of a gentleman, the charity of a Christian, and the tolerance of an ardent friend of religious liberty, those who differ most widely from me in my theological opinions; for they have the same right to freedom of thought and speech as myself. But still, I am calling on you to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints. I am endeavouring to fill your

hearts with a deep sense of the importance of the truth, and entreating you to let the world see how important you consider it. I am conjuring you to consider whether in a case where salvation and condemnation are concerned, indifference and lukewarmness are not treason to God and the souls of men, and whether even some enthusiasm is not loyalty to one and mercy to the other? We hold that man is responsible to God for his belief, and that men may be lost by a wrong creed as well as a wrong practice. Hear the apostle, "Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach unto you any other gospel than that we have preached unto you, let him be accursed;" and then to give weight to his anathema and cause it to sink deeper into the souls of those for whom it was intended, he repeats the curse. This was not an outburst of unsanctified passion, a sulphureous enthusiasm, the ebullition of an inflamed imagination, a fanatical zeal. It was the cool, deliberate dictate of a man of tenderness and tears. It was more, the words were those of one who wrote as he was moved by the Holy Ghost. Hear also the language of the apostle of love. "Whosoever transgresseth and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. If there come unto you any who bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God-speed, for he that biddeth him God-speed is a partaker of his evil deeds." Is this the spirit of the age in which we live? What bigots would those apostles, uttering such words, have been accounted, by the liberals, had they lived in our days! If truth be anything, it must be a great thing. If truth be a blessing, error must be a curse. If truth saves, error must destroy. And the friends of truth might learn something from the abettors of error.

Are they lukewarm, torpid, silent, inert? Look at infidels, look at Roman Catholics, look at Mormonites. Friends of the Redeemer, preachers of the cross, shall lukewarmness be found only in our camp? Shall we be the only troops which advance to the great conflict between truth and error, with timid hearts and faltering steps? Shall we who are led by the Captain of Salvation, who march with the banner of the cross floating over our heads, whose war cry is, "Worthy the Lamb," shall we think little of the contest, shall we think little of the truth? O, let us from this day adopt afresh the boast of the apostle, and swear to one another and to God, that we will glory only in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. Whatever was the fact with Constantine, whether it were a sign from heaven, or only a vision of imagination, to us it is a reality, the cross is seen in our heavens, and the well-known inscription, "By this conquer," is, or ought to be, read by us.

And now, beloved brethren, is this characteristic of our body, and what is going on within our denomination at the present time?

I am not unaware that advantage has been taken by some who are not favourably disposed towards us, to represent certain matters of recent occurrence as indications of a rather general departure of our body from the doctrines of evangelical truth. Others who look upon us with no unfriendly eye, are lamenting our divergence from the standard of orthodoxy; while, I fear some among ourselves are hailing these things as symptoms of the approach of a more liberal and philosophical theology. What else can mean such language as this, which is quoted from one of our own journals, a journal

of great ability and extensively read by our younger ministers. "For years past there has been gradually forming among reading, thoughtful and devout men, both in the ministry and out of it, an undergrowth of conviction, impatient of, if not hostile to, many of those metaphysical forms in which the teachings of Christianity have been distorted and stereotyped by the dogmatism of theological schools." I am afraid the meaning of this is but too obvious, and that if followed out, it will lead to a new theology, not only in form, but in substance. I am happy, however, in the conviction that the theological teaching of our colleges is the inculcation of a sound orthodoxy, and that in the main, the doctrines held by our ancestors, the Puritans and the Nonconformists, are the divinity of our seats of learning. I believe the great body of our ministers still hold fast these momentous truths. But I will not conceal my apprehensions, and they are painful ones, that a few of our young ministers, in their anxiety to avoid a stereotyped phraseology, which, if the change be confined to this, would not be mischievous, are in some danger of giving up truths which were stereotyped nearly eighteen centuries ago upon the page of revelation, and were intended by the Author of inspiration to be stereotyped there for all ages and all generations. It is an age of liberalism and independent thinking, and this is finding its way into our ministry to such an extent, that in the anxiety to get out of the old and deep ruts, some add the danger of getting off the road. Captivated by the genius or the eloquence with which religious novelties are advocated in the present day by men of unquestioned talent, whose theology consists of half-truths, and whose defective views are set forth, somewhat mistily it is true,

yet in a seductive style of earnestness, our young ministers are in danger of following them, and in some cases are perhaps following them, in their aberrations from the line of orthodoxy.

I have now used a term of ill savour in the nostrils of many, and it is one melancholy symptom of the age, that orthodoxy, if by one party it has become almost a cant term, is by the other pronounced with a sneer, or made the subject of ridicule and satire. In some cases where sound theology is retained, it appears to me to be held with too slight an idea of its vast importance as the means of all spiritual life. It is maintained as a creed, or a kind of religious science, which cannot be logically disproved; but it is kept sadly in the background, as if we could carry on religion without it, and treated as a thing by itself, which has no vital connection with Christian experience. We hear, indeed, a great deal about "spiritual life," but it is a life apart from spiritual truth, a kind of religious, poetic sentimentalism, or of merely a zealous activity, a life and an activity that may be carried on upon almost any system of doctrine. A negative theology, I scarcely like to use a phrase so bandied about, yet it is a very expressive one, and I can find no substitute for it, is almost sure, if it be long maintained, to end in positive heresy. If the ground be not occupied by the plants of truth, the weeds of error will be sure to spring up. And I confess that, without being panic-stricken at all, I see many things, which way soever I look, that make me serious and sad. There is in some quarters, if not amongst us, yet in other places, a mischievous operation going on of chipping, and filing, and paring away christian truths until they square themselves to their places in modern philosophies.

But all these attempts "to render 'Pauline notions' into the graceful equivalents of 'modern thought,' give us a philosophy which philosophers may well scoff at, and a theology which biblical theologians ought to denounce, as little better than covered atheism." The whole evangelical church is coming to a crisis, and all the great verities of religious belief, which we thought had been settled, are going to be tried over again. May God carry us and all others safely through the crisis! I bear in recollection that a kindred body a century and a half ago, had one great lapse from truth. Most of the Unitarian congregations which now exist sprung out of those that were once Trinitarian. And it can neither be denied nor concealed that some of the periodicals sustained by that body, are already rejoicing in the hope of another defection. May their hopes never be realised: and in order that they may not, may a spirit of enlightened and holy zeal for truth be poured out upon our ministers, and especially the younger portion of them; and may a spirit of earnest and importunate supplication pervade our churches for the preservation of sound doctrine among us!

May I, before I come to the other division of my subject, suggest to my young brethren the recollection of what it is that in every age of the Christian era has effected all great moral and spiritual revolutions. What was it that planted the Christian church in the world, extinguished the deceptive light of philosophy in the schools, overturned the altars of impiety, and established Christianity on the ruins of the classic mythology of the Greeks and Romans? What was it by which Claude of Turin filled with holy light the valleys of Piedmont in the ninth century? What was it that enabled Wick-

liffe in England, and John Huss and Jerome of Prague, in Germany, to bring on the dawn of the Reformation, and Luther, in a subsequent age, its meridian splendour? What was it by which Whitfield and Wesley revived the spirit of vital piety which slumbered so soundly beneath the towers of the establishment and in the chapels of Dissenters? What was it that founded all our modern institutions for the evangelization of the world? And what is it that has won the splendid victories and rich trophies of modern missions, in the isles of the Pacific, and the deserts of Africa, the plains of India, and the cities of China? What is it that either by the press or the pulpit in these days is converting souls to Christ? Who are the preachers that are not only most popular, but most useful? What is the kind of books that awaken and convert? Is it a modernized and philosophized gospel, or is it the old truth in old modes of representation, with a different style of composition? But one answer can be returned, and that is, all this was done by that which converted the learned, the idolatrous, the wealthy, the polluted, the licentious inhabitants of Corinth into the holy worshippers of the true God, and the humble, happy followers of the Lord Jesus Christ, that is the doctrine of Christ and him crucified. And surely if in any place and age, it were lawful or expedient to adopt a philosophical style of preaching, in order to adapt it to the circumstances of the times, it was in the days of Paul, and at Corinth, where, next to Athens, the philosophy of the day was taught and valued. Yet even there, the most learned, the most logical, and I may add, the most useful, of the apostles, rejecting all adventitious aids, determined to know nothing but Christ and him crucified. And he is no

philosopher, think of himself as he may, who does not perceive the adaptation of this subject to produce spiritual effects. Talk they of genius, what genius can select a theme for its brightest coruscations so replete with all that is dazzling as the cross? Talk they of eloquence, at what fount can eloquence drink in such inspiration as is supplied by the cross? One gush of evangelical truth from a heart constrained by the love of Christ, and uttered in words of light and pathos, has more power over an audience, and moves the deepest feelings of the human heart with a more irresistible force, than could the splendour of Tully, or the thunder of Demosthenes. Beloved brethren, what were the petty dissensions of Greece, or the invasion of Philip, or the treason of Catiline, as a theme for an orator, compared with that which you carry to the pulpit and which you handle when you take your station at the cross, with heaven opening above you, hell moving beneath you, eternity spreading out before you, and a crowd of immortal souls, each concerned in these tremendous realities, for the objects of your address, with their everlasting interests pressing upon your hearts?

And if we would have preachers who will act upon the suggestions here laid down, who will preach with clearness, fulness and power, the doctrine of the cross, and be good ministers of the New Covenant, how much depends upon our Colleges where they receive their official training! What a responsibility depends upon our Professors, especially those whose department is theology! How carefully should they not only teach sound divinity, which we believe they do, but watch the sentiments imbibed by the Students! How anxiously

should they converse with individuals, as well as with their classes, on the views which they are receiving of divine truth! How closely should they study all the prevailing phases of error, and how cautiously guard their pupils against them! Let them take heed to give us sound divines, good preachers and pastors, as well as scholars and university graduates.

II. I now go on to consider what, according to the text, should be the spirit of our ministry, Speaking the truth in love. In the temple of God, the altars of truth and love stand side by side, and no one is called or qualified to minister at the former, who does not also officiate at the latter. Is there a word in any language invested with such attractions as love? And this is Christianity, whether objectively or subjectively viewed. The New Testament is adorned with its beauty and redolent with its fragrance. God is love. Christ is love. Heaven is love. So is religion. The love mentioned in the text is the same as that which the apostle, in the most elegant and eloquent personification ever drawn, even by an inspired pen, has set forth in the thirteenth chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians, and to which allusion will presently be made: not love to God, though that is the basis of it; nor exclusively love to the brethren, though they are the primary objects of it; but love to man as man. A delight in happiness and an intense desire to promote it. One of the fruits of regenerating grace, and nourished by a sense of God's love to us: and therefore not mere good nature, not a scentless wild flower blooming in the wilderness of man's unrenewed heart, but a heavenly exotic planted by God's own hand, in the garden of a converted soul; a spiritual passion-flower, growing on

Calvary, a divine root twining for support around the cross. This is practical religion, so far as our fellow creatures are concerned: a virtue, a grace, for which there can be no substitute.

Observe now the relation of love to, and its connection with, the truth. It is congruous in its nature, perfectly homogeneous; for as we have shown, all the doctrines of truth are the manifestations of love. Consequently love is the offspring of truth, and as charity is the daughter of truth, so zeal is the daughter of love. Truth with all its greatness and glory, is but a means to an end, and that end is love; even as man's intellectual nature is subordinate to his moral one. Religious truth, though of an infinitely higher nature than all other truths, will do us no more good than they, as long as it remains in the intellect, and does not sanctify the heart. If truth be the mantle of the renewed soul, love is the golden clasp that fastens it and keeps it on. The truth, I know, is to be loved, for its own sake, but chiefly for its purpose and tendency to make us holy. Hence the prayer of Christ for His apostles, "Sanctify them by thy truth; thy word is truth!" The love of truth, apart from its design to make us holy, is the germ of antinomianism. Viewed separately from its philanthropic and sanctifying power, even the truth may become an object of idolatrous regard. It is the adaptation of a piece of machinery to accomplish some great and good result, and not merely its skilful construction, that constitutes its claim to admiration.

How beautifully is this set forth by the celebrated Cudworth in his sermon before the House of Commons in the time of the Commonwealth. "O divine love! the sweet harmony of souls! the music of angels! the

joy of God's own heart! the very darling of his bosom! the source of true happiness! the pure quintessence of heaven, that which reconciles the jarring principles of the world and makes them all chime together, and melts men's hearts into one another! See how St. Paul describes it, and it cannot but enamour your affections towards it. 'Love suffereth long and is kind, envieth not, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth: beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.' I may add in a word it is the best-natured thing, the best-complexioned thing in the world. Let us express this sweet, harmonious affection in these jarring times, that so, if possible, we may tune the world to better music. Especially in matters of religion, let us strive with all meekness to instruct and convince one another. Let us endeavour to promote the gospel, the dove-like gospel, in a dove-like spirit. This was the way in which the gospel was at first propagated in the world. Christ did not cry nor lift up his voice in the streets: a bruised reed he did not break, and the smoking flax he did not quench, and yet he brought forth judgment unto victory. He whispered the gospel to us from Mount Sion in a still, small voice, and yet the sound thereof went out quickly through all the earth. The gospel at first came down softly upon the earth like the dew upon Gideon's fleece, and yet it quickly soaked quite through it, and doubtless this is still the most effectual way to promote it farther: sweetness and ingenuousness will more command men's minds than passion, sourness, and severity, as the softest pillow sooner breaks the flint

than the hardest marble. Let us speak the truth in love; and of the two indeed be content to miss the conveying of a speculative truth than to part with love. When we would convince men of any error by the force of truth, let us withal pour the sweet balm of love upon their heads. Truth and love are the two most powerful things in the world, and when they both go together, they cannot easily be withstood. The golden beams of truth and the silken cords of love twisted together, will draw men on with a sweet violence whether they will or no."

If you are not tired of Cudworth, I will give you also the next paragraph in this wonderful sermon, which is so much better than anything I could say that I shall not scruple to give it, though rather long.

"Let us take heed we do not sometimes call that zeal for God and his Gospel, which is nothing else than our own stormy and tempestuous passion. True zeal is a sweet, heavenly and gentle flame which maketh us active for God, but always within the sphere of love. It never calls fire from heaven to consume those that differ a little from us in their own apprehensions. It is like that kind of lightning which philosophers speak of, that melts the sword within, but singeth not the scabbard; it strives to save the soul, but hurteth not the body. True zeal is a loving thing, and makes us always active to edification and not destruction. If we keep the fire of zeal within the chimney, in its own proper place, it never doth any hurt, it only warmeth, quickeneth, and enliveneth us; but if we once let it break out, and catch hold of the thatch of our flesh and kindle our corrupt nature, and set the house of our body on fire, it is no longer zeal, it is no heavenly fire, but a most

destructive and devouring thing. True zeal is an ignis lambens, a soft and gentle flame, that will not scorch our hand; it is no predatory and voracious thing: but carnal, fleshly zeal is like the spirit of gunpowder set on fire, that tears and blows up all that stands before it. True zeal is like the vital heat in us, that we live upon, which we never feel to be angry or troublesome, but though it gently feed upon the radical oil within us, that sweet balsam of our natural moisture, yet it lives lovingly with it, and maintains that by which it is fed: but that other furious and distempered zeal, is nothing else but a fever in the soul. To conclude, we may learn what kind of zeal it is that we should make use of in promoting the gospel, by an emblem of God's own, given us in the Scriptures, those fiery tongues which on the day of Pentecost sat upon the apostles, which sure were harmless flames, for we cannot read that they did any hurt, or that they did so much as singe a hair of their heads."

And if anything more need be added, it is this one remark, that zeal is not truly Christian, if it is not concentrated in the first place upon religious truth, for the sake of religious life, and shewn in a spirit of religious charity. The flame of this holy passion is fed with the oil of love, and not with the alcohol of unsanctified passion, and it is a flame which the higher it rises in ardour, the more it trembles with humility and meekness. The zealot in religion should ever seek to be a seraph, or one as nearly allied to a seraph as possible.

Is it not most lamentably clear from the testimony of Scripture, as well as from the records of ecclesiastical history, and the evidence of our own observation, perhaps even of our own experience, that love is, and has

ever been, the most wanting of any of the Christian graces, even where we should expect to see it enthroned in majesty and ruling with power, I mean the Christian church. And yet, it is asked, what do we see in Christendom? A vast complication of ecclesiastical machinery, churches established and churches unestablished, to keep men in the trammels of sectarianism; a vast accumulation of doctrines to be believed, duties to be performed, and rites to be observed; a vast array of biblical learning and criticism, in which every word is examined, weighed, and defined. We have creeds, confessions, liturgies, prayer-books, catechisms, and forms of faith and discipline. We have bishops, priests, pastors, and teachers. We have councils, convocations, synods, conferences, assemblies, and other ecclesiastical bodies, without number. We have commentaries, reviews, magazines, religious newspapers, and journals of all kinds, and thousands upon thousands of religious books, from the four page tract to the quarto volume. We have cathedrals, churches, chapels, and schools; in short a wondrous and complicated mass of means, instrumentalities, agencies; but where is our charity? All these things are but means to an end, and that end is charity out of a pure heart, a good conscience, and faith unfeigned. Where amidst all this immense and costly paraphernalia of Christianity is the exemplification of that charity without which all these things are but as sounding brass and a tinking cymbal? Where is it in our sermons and our religious literature? You and I know thousands of volumes on faith and hope; but I know of only one work, and that by no means worthy of the subject, on "Christian Charity."

How is this? How is it that the greatest of the

Christian graces should receive the least attention? The principal cause is the difficulty of its exercise. Men love an easy as well as a cheap religion; and a religion that flatters their pride and pampers their self-righteousness. Hence it is that many are prone to substitute ritualism for the religion of the heart, a mere externalism for that internal warfare which the gospel calls its professors to carry on without intermission against the inbred sins of the soul; while others find it an easy matter to be active in the manifestation of public spirit, compared with the great work of crucifying the flesh, with its affections and lusts; yet we cannot be Christians unless we have the mind of Christ, the pure, loving, gentle mind of Christ. Is it easy to love our enemies, and bless them that curse us? Is it easy to repress all the vengeful feelings of the heart, so promptly and indignantly rising to repel assaults, to retaliate injuries, and to repay insult with insult? Is it easy work to carry out the law of charity which "suffereth long, and is kind" even to those unkind to us? "which envieth not" the superiority in possession, reputation, success, of others: "which seeketh not her own," but yields up her preference for the good of others, and is content to surrender anything but principle for peace: "which does not behave unseemly" as a Christian, towards any one, in action, word, or manner: "which vaunteth not itself, and is not puffed up," but is humble, meek, and modest: "which thinketh no evil" of others, and is ever ready to impute a good motive till a bad one is proved: "which rejoiceth not in iniquity," even when committed by a foe, but "rejoiceth in the truth" when it is seen adorning his character, and strengthening his cause: "which covereth all things" that are faulty with the mantle of love.

instead of magnifying or proclaiming them: "which believeth all things" to the credit of another: "hopeth" where there is not evidence to establish conviction; and "endureth all things," in the way of labour, sacrifice, and self-denial? Such is love; and if this be easy, there is nothing difficult in our world. Easy! Why we are ready to say, "Who is sufficient for these things?" If this be Christianity, "Who then can be saved?" With man it is impossible, but with God all things are possible. Nothing but Omnipotent grace can enable such proud selfish hearts as ours to practise this virtue.

Here then, is the cause of the scarcity of love, its difficulty. It is easy to pray, easy to hear sermons, and easy to feel under them; easy to some to give money, time, labour, for public societies; easy to be a passionate Churchman, Methodist, or Dissenter; easy to be zealous for a church or a creed; yes, and even easy to practise bodily austerities; in short, easier to do anything, than to love, in the Scriptural meaning of the term. And yet we must love or give up all pretensions to be Christians; for the apostle tells us that the eloquence of men and angels can be no substitute for it; nor the most wonder-working faith; nor the most diffusive charity; nor the torments of martyrdom. Instead of allowing its difficulty to deter us from it, we should on that account with a noble heroism set ourselves to cultivate and practise it. We should consider it our religion, our calling, our great business. It is the evidence of true faith; the first fruit of the Spirit; the proof and badge of our discipleship; the identifying law of Christ's kingdom; the brightest ornament of our profession; the last evidence of the Saviour's divine mission.

And where should we look for the brightest and most

beautiful exemplifications of this grace but to the pulpit, where every grace of our holy religion should be exhibited, not only in the sermons but in the character of the preacher. He himself should be an incarnation of love; a living embodiment of this seraphic virtue. It is not enough that he should be rigidly just, or spotlessly chaste, or invariably true; he must follow also whatsoever things that are lovely. He is the teacher of a religion whose greatest grace is love; and he must himself be a pattern of the religion which he promulgates. If he be of a hard, austere, and crabbed temper naturally, he must take pains with himself to mollify his disposition. He tells his hearers that grace does little for a man if it does not subdue and control his temper; and he must therefore show them that this is practicable by letting them see how it has subdued his. And then he must carry this spirit into his ministrations. He must appear in the pulpit as one who has just come from communing with a God of Love, and whose whole soul has been transformed into the Divine image. Love should sparkle in the tear of his eye, smile in the radiance of his countenance, and speak in the tones of his voice. The sermon should not only come to the hearer's intellect with all the clearness of truth, but to his heart with all the warmth of the preacher's love. The audience must feel that the preacher loves them. He must draw them with the cords of love, which are the bands of a man.

The history of the church has proved that of all means of conversion, the most insinuating and successful is the exhibition of the love of Jesus; but then the manner of preaching must be in harmony with the matter. Perhaps I may be referred to the apostles of

our Lord, and to the beloved and loving John among the rest, who wanted fire from heaven to consume their enemies. Yes, but on the day of Pentecost they received, even as they needed it, the baptism of another spirit. "There and then these Elishas found the mantle of their ascended Lord. Had it been otherwise, had they not been made of love, as well as messengers of love; had not the love they preached breathed in every tone and beamed in every look, had they not illustrated in their practice, the genius of the gospel, their mission had been a signal failure; they had never opened the hearts of men, they had never made their way in a resistant world, never conquered it. Just as it is not with stubborn but pliant iron that locks are picked, the hearts of sinners are to be opened only by those who bring a Christ-like gentleness to the work; and who are ready with Paul's large, loving, kind, and generous disposition to be all things to all men, if so be they may win some. Never had the disciples gone forth conquering and to conquer, had they brought their old, bigotted, quarrelsome, unsanctified temper to the mission. They might have died for Christianity, but she had died with them; and, bound to their stake, expiring in their ashes, she had been entombed in the sepulchre of her first and last apostles." And then when all her ministers in the pulpit, and her followers in the pews, the whole body of her disciples, shall be seen adorning her doctrines of truth with the beauties of holiness, which are in fact the beauties of love, she will bring down from heaven the answer of the Redeemer's prayer, and thus present to the world her last and strongest evidence of her heavenly origin, and achieve her brightest victory

upon earth. Before her seraph form, infidelity, like Satan before Ithuriel, will stand abashed, and feel "how awful goodness is."

Nothing hinders or imperils love more than controversy. This tries spirits of what sort they are; and alas! for the discoveries of unsanctified temper which this test has often brought out. Controversy cannot, ought not, to be silenced. What is Christianity but a controversy with all the false religions and false principles in the world? We are commanded "to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints." As long as error is in the field, stalking like Goliath before the armies of Israel and challenging them to the combat, truth must go forth to meet it, like David, in simplicity of intention, strength of heart, and dependence upon God; but only with its own weapons, and meekness and love must be its sling and its stone. Silence would be treason against truth. This glorious deposit in the church of God, when assailed must be defended, and defended to the last. Nor must truth act merely on the defensive; it is, and must be, essentially aggressive. Whatever ruins men's souls, or injures their piety, must be attacked, and if possible vanquished. Peace may be bought too dearly. I have no sympathy with those who would hush controversy by the voice of conciliation, and sacrifice theology to charity. No, no, we must not be afraid of defending truth against error, lest we should be accused of violating the spirit of religion for the sake of its truths. We must not be frightened from our convictions, or hindered from defending or promulgating them, by the maudlin spirit which calls orthodoxy bigotry, and earnestness for truth fanaticism.

It is a stale trick to call good things by bad names, and thus raise a prejudice against them. We are not of those who would vilify and dismiss doctrines as dogmas. The man who for the sake of ease, or under the influence of fear, would, without resistance, see truth opposed, or even neglected, is a traitor or a coward. A dishonourable peace, say many, is less desirable than a just war. Whether this holds good or not in the politics of this world, it is true to the letter in the contest between truth and error.

And should we, my dear brethren, be called to contend against error for the faith once delivered to the saints, how careful should we then be to speak the truth in love. How sad and solemn is it, that charity should so often have been seen to come bleeding and weeping from the controversies of brethren, and uttering the bitter lament, "These are the wounds I have received in the house of my friends." Is it not a lamentation and woe, that the bitterest controversies have been those carried on about religion; as if when contending for truth, love should be ordered off the field, and malice, wrath, and all uncharitableness, have been called in to take her place.

I am aware there is a spurious thing called charity, which is but a bantling of infidelity, whose creed and whose song are contained in the adage of the free-thinking Roman Catholic poet,

> "For modes of faith let graceless zealots fight,
> His can't be wrong, whose life is in the right:"

which means, that all creeds are equally true and therefore equally false.

The man who fights for truth in wrath and dogmat-

ism, is almost sure to defeat himself. That truth which, when couched in the language, and accompanied with the appeals, of affection, finds such welcome into the hearts of men, has often brought upon its propounders the re-action of stout indignant hostility, just because of the stern intolerance wherewith it has been proposed to them. This makes it of the utmost practical importance that neither the pride nor the passions of men should mingle in the discussion, when labouring either with or against each other. Too much has it prejudiced the cause of truth in the world, that it has been so often urged and insisted on with that wrath which worketh not the righteousness of God. Passion and pride, wrath and anger, sarcasm and irony, are all unsuitable to truth; they are not homogeneous with it, but antagonistic to it. Just so far as the heart is wanting in love, it is wanting in truth. To love in fact is a part of truth. It is as true that I am to love, as it is that I am to believe. Opinions may be in the head and upon the lips, but opinions alone are not truth, only its corpse; living truth includes love.

At the formation of the Evangelical Alliance, that attempt at Christian union, whose only partial success proves how little charity there is yet in the church, the following Resolution was passed:

"That the Members of this Alliance earnestly and affectionately recommend to each other in their own conduct, and particularly in their own use of the press, carefully to abstain from, and put away, all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, with all malice; and in all things in which they may yet differ from each other, to be kind, tender-hearted, forbearing one another in love,

forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven them; in everything seeking to be followers of God, as dear children, and to walk in love as Christ also hath loved them."

And to show that the Alliance and this Resolution were not intended to stop controversy, but only to pluck out its sting, and baptize it at the font of charity, I may mention that two of those who adopted this rule, (one of them was at the time a Secretary of the Alliance,) have, since the passing of that Resolution, published, each a volume on church government; Mr Birks, on the side of the Church of England, and Dr. Wardlaw, on the side of Congregationalism: and both volumes may be triumphantly referred to as keeping closely to the very letter and spirit of their own resolution, and as models of the Christian courtesy with which controversy on religious subjects should be maintained. And if brethren of different communions should, and sometimes do, maintain antagonism of sentiment with christian charity, how criminal is an opposite spirit in those who are not only brethren in Christ, but also in religious denomination. It was an ancient fable, that when the serpent drinks, it spits out its venom first. I wish all who drank the waters of strife would do the same.

It has been somewhere said, that if a botanist, when travelling, had lost the knowledge of his exact locality at the time, both as to longitude and latitude, he would be able at once to ascertain his geographical position, by the discovery of a certain plant or flower which he knew was to be found only in that particular spot. In like manner, as love is a flower indigenous to the church of Christ, and growing nowhere else on earth but there, a spirit from another world, knowing this fact, would

also be able when he lighted on our globe, to ascertain that he had reached the fellowship of Christians, if by no other means, yet by seeing this blessed "*agape*" in full bloom and fragrance. But were he to arrive in our country, and to survey our denomination, just at this time, would he conclude that he had reached the native place of holy love? Or at any rate would he not lament to see this heavenly exotic sickly, shrivelled, and withering in the deadly shade of our envenomed controversy? Have we not told the world in books and sermons that this flower does grow and flourish in the communion of saints! And is this the way in which we convince men that our representation is true? Alas, alas! How long shall we give them occasion to convert the testimony of Julian, so honourable to the early disciples, "See how these christians love one another," into bitter irony, and compel them to say, "Yes, look at their controversies and contentions. Read their envenomed pamphlets. Hearken to their angry vituperations. Behold their hostile separations, and see how indeed they love one another!!"

Although I have addressed this discourse chiefly to ministers, the subject of it belongs also to the members of our churches, and it is of vast importance to them. The truth is the means of your salvation and sanctification, and love the evidence of it. If we are to preach nothing but truth, you ought to receive nothing else. If this must constitute our creed, it must equally constitute yours. To you it should be paramount to every thing else, to talent, genius, eloquence, and oratory. And yet there is some ground to fear that with many the truth is little, compared with these things. Many of the secondary matters of social worship, such as eccle-

siastical architecture, psalmody, liturgies, and organs, are matters of so much concern in this age as to be likely, without great care and vigilance, to displace anxiety for the truth and salvation of souls. Signs of indifference to the great primary and central object, the truth as it is in Jesus, are but too apparent. Is it not a fact that when a church becomes destitute of a pastor, its expressed wish and first declaration is, "We must now look out for a man of talent." And the talent is much more thought of with many than the truth which the talent is to be employed in preaching. Piety and soundness in the faith are not altogether ignored, but they are not, as they ought to be, the first things thought of, valued, and sought. I know that it is desirable that all ministers should be talented men. The ministerial office is the noblest work for the noblest intellects, and for some situations eminently gifted men must be sought for. I am no advocate for reverend imbecility, sacred incompetency. I do not say that eminent piety will supply the lack of other things, or that much grace will be sufficient, even if there be but little talent. By no means, but what I am contending for is that it is piety and sound doctrine that must be to the mind of the church the primary qualification of the pastor, and therefore the first thing sought after when a pastor is wanted. To adopt the language of Dr. Chalmers, I would say to our churches, "Pin not your creed to your minister. Keep fast to your Bible. Try, if you can, to outstrip us in the wisdom of the Word of Christ, and bring the salutary control of a zealous, and enlightened, and ready population, to bear upon the priesthood. Let not your faith come by hearing alone, but let your

hearing be tried by the Word of God. Have the Bible, that high and ultimate standard of appeal, perpetually in your eye. Cultivate a growing acquaintance with this standard. It will keep all right and steady, and save you from being agitated by the ever varying winds of human doctrine and human speculation." Yes, and sound doctrine in the pew will keep it in the pulpit, for the people will not endure, ought not to endure, anything else. But then, be no less zealous for love than you are for truth. Study and practise the apostle's incomparably beautiful description of this seraphic excellence. Your own happiness, the credit of religion, and the honour of Christ depend upon it. Be bright specimens and examples of Christian charity, and let it be seen you are so earnest in this virtue, that you could be as willing to become martyrs for love, as others have for faith.

And now, my beloved brethren, whether ministers or hearers, let us, on breaking up this our holy convocation and returning to our own homes, carry with us into our various spheres of action a still firmer adherence to the truth, and a more resolute determination to cultivate the spirit of love. Let us all press closer to the cross, to catch more of the spirit of Him who died upon it. Not abating one jot or tittle of our orthodox faith, not yielding ourselves to a sickly and sickening lukewarmness, but for truth exhibiting the courage of heroes and the constancy of martyrs; let us manifest at the same time the docility of children, and the gentle fervour of seraphs. While with eagle vision and pinion we soar to higher and higher altitudes in the regions of truth, and bathe our wings in the flood of celestial radiance

poured from the Sun of Righteousness, let us at the same time cherish the dove-like spirit of Christian charity.

We should all have clearer views of truth, if we had more of the spirit of love. In religious matters, more perhaps than in any others, the heart influences and guides the judgment; and the dispositions which we foster prepare us, according to their nature, to see or lose the force of evidence. "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether I speak of myself." In these impressive and instructive words our Lord has taught us that feeling affects thinking. And who can doubt it? When the pupils of an ancient sage asked their master what they should do to get winged souls, such as might soar aloft in the bright beams of truth, he bid them bathe themselves in the waters of life: and upon their asking what these were, he told them the four cardinal virtues, which are the four rivers of Paradise. We are, or profess to be, travelling to heaven, which is the region and the home of both truth and love; and we who by age and infirmity are drawing near to it, seem to anticipate more intensely, and to feel more sensibly, than we once did, the raptures that will be produced by the perfection of the truth and the consummation of love: just as sailors approaching the spice islands, inhale the precious odours which are wafted on the wings of the breeze from groves of oranges and trees of cinnamon. Let us all look up to that blessed world and be ever preparing for it, where the tree of knowledge grows fast by the tree of life, and drawing its nourishment from the same source with it, yields no fruit but such as is as wholesome as it is plea

sant to the taste and fair to the eye. In that glorious state where all good things live, and shine, and flourish, and triumph for ever, the supreme beauty, glory, and excellence is love. All are brethren, and all are loved as brethren. All are divinely amiable and excellent friends. Every one possesses the holiness that is loved, and the complacency by which it is loved. There every one, conscious of being entirely lovely and entirely beloved, reciprocates that same love to that great multitude which no man can number, of all nations, kindreds, and tongues, which fills the immeasurable regions of heaven.

As for myself, I cannot expect at my age to meet you many more times. I am on the border country, and drawing near the close of a lengthened pastorate of labour, and through unmerited grace, one of no small share of success and comfort. It is a matter of deep sorrow to me, to see in the evening of my days the horizon of our denomination, so cloudy, troubled, and stormy. In the hope of doing something to calm and harmonize the minds that are chafing one another, and distressing us all, I have endeavoured thus to throw oil upon the agitated waters. And I know not that I can better finish this too long discourse than in the words with which Bishop Horsley concludes his controversy with Dr. Priestley. "The probability, however, seems to be that ere these times shall arrive, if they shall arrive at all, which we trust they will not, when Socinianism shall be in the ascendant, my antagonist and I shall both be gone to those unseen abodes, where the din of controversy and the din of war are equally unheard. There we shall rest

together till the last trumpet summon us to stand before our God and King. That whatever of intemperate wrath and carnal anger hath mixed itself on either side, with the zeal with which we have pursued our fierce contention, may then be forgiven in both, is a prayer which I breathe from the bottom of my soul; and to which my antagonist, if he hath any part in the spirit of a Christian, will upon his bended knees, say, Amen."

THE END.

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